

# The State of Data Governance in 2025

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# 1

# Executive summary

Market leaders are transforming their data governance strategies to drive business value. As data complexity and AI adoption accelerate, the gap between leaders and laggards is widening.

**AI success requires strategic data governance**

Market leaders are gaining competitive advantage by treating governance as an enabler, not a bottleneck, for AI initiatives.

**Modern governance drives revenue**

Forward-thinking organizations are moving beyond risk reduction, accelerating data product launches and unlocking new revenue streams through trusted data monetization.

**Strategic governance outperforms**

Leaders are seeing measurable advantages over industry peers in customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and speed to market.

**Data contracts transform data ownership**

Enterprises are shifting governance from a cost center to value creator through clear ownership and accountability.

**The governance gap widens**

As governance becomes a board-level priority, organizations must choose between transformation or falling behind.

The complete whitepaper provides executive insights on transforming data governance from a cost center into a strategic driver of enterprise value.

# 2

# Key takeaways

Data governance is critical to driving innovation, efficiency, and trust in 2025. As organizations face increasing data complexity and the rise of AI, governance is evolving to support business agility, collaboration, and scalability. This report provides actionable insights and strategies from a survey of hundreds of data professionals and expert panel discussions at Secoda's Data Leaders Forum, focusing on how organizations are navigating governance challenges and opportunities.

## Key takeaways

### 1 Data governance is driving business value

Governance frameworks are being redefined to ensure data is not just compliant but also accessible, reliable, and aligned with business goals.

### 2 Shifting priorities for governance in 2025

- **43%** prioritize democratization and accessibility, enabling teams to use data effectively.
- **24%** focus on agility, integrating governance into workflows for faster decision-making.
- **17%** emphasize security and privacy, safeguarding sensitive data as regulatory demands grow.
- **16%** address ethical considerations with the rise of AI.

### 3 Balancing speed with control is a persistent challenge

Organizations must navigate the tension between providing fast, seamless access to data and maintaining robust controls to ensure accuracy and security.

### 4 Tools and technologies shaping governance

- **83%** of organizations use data catalogs to centralize metadata, improve transparency, and reduce silos.
- **58%** rely on lineage tracking to ensure data accuracy and traceability.

- **58%** leverage self-service documentation to empower teams with trusted data while reducing reliance on technical staff.
- **42%** implement data quality monitoring to validate and maintain accuracy in pipelines.
- **17%** are adopting emerging practices like data contracts to foster accountability and trust between data producers and consumers.

#### **5 Governance frameworks deliver measurable business impact**

- **50%** report improved collaboration by breaking down silos and enabling alignment across teams.
- **33%** achieve faster, smarter decision-making by improving data quality and consistency.
- **25%** reduce compliance risks with strong governance policies and automated monitoring.
- **17%** see increased data literacy and data-driven decision-making through standardized practices.
- **15%** enhance customer experiences through trusted, well-structured data.

#### **6 Cultural alignment is key to governance success**

While **50%** of organizations embed governance into workflows, only **28%** tie governance to team OKRs, and just **6%** prioritize employee training, highlighting opportunities to strengthen alignment and accountability.

This report offers a roadmap for embedding governance into workflows, building scalable frameworks, and aligning governance strategies with business goals. By adopting proactive and collaborative governance practices, organizations can drive growth, ensure compliance, and build trust in their data.

# 3

# The governance paradox

Data governance takes many forms, influenced by an organization's size, structure, and priorities. Smaller companies often emphasize accessibility and collaboration to remain agile, while larger enterprises prioritize control, compliance, and scalability. Despite these differences, organizations face a shared challenge: how to provide fast and seamless data access without compromising security, accuracy, or control.

This section explores how companies are defining data governance, how these definitions have evolved over time, and the challenges organizations face in striking the right balance. By examining these facets, we can better understand the strategies organizations are using to navigate the governance paradox.

## How companies are defining data governance

Our findings reveal a diverse range of definitions for data governance, reflecting the unique needs and priorities of organizations. Smaller, agile companies often see governance as a way to reduce silos and empower teams without adding unnecessary complexity. In contrast, larger enterprises emphasize control, compliance, and scalability to manage the growing challenges posed by AI and data democratization.

**Data governance can mean different things depending on an organization's size, maturity, and tech stack. How does your company define data governance?**

### 1 Trust and reliability

Several leaders emphasized that governance is about ensuring data is accurate, reliable, and secure, building trust across teams. Kelly Burdine, Director of Data Science and Analytics at Wellthy, described governance

**"Governance is the practice of ensuring data is accurate, reliable, available, and secure."**



**Kelly Burdine**

Director of Data Science and Analytics, Wellthy

as "the practice of ensuring data is accurate, reliable, available, and secure," emphasizing its role in building trust across teams.

## 2 Clear guardrails

Another described governance as a way to "reduce the number of decisions individuals need to make and help them make good decisions quickly," framing it as a set of guardrails that streamline data use and management.

## 3 Balancing access and control

Oriol Miroso, Director of Data Solutions at Brooklyn Data Co., described governance as "ensuring that the data is of high quality, that the right stakeholders can find it and get access, and that those who shouldn't see the data can't access it, all in the pursuit of business value." This highlights the need to balance accessibility with security in governance practices.

## 4 Evolving definitions

Some companies are still defining their approach, acknowledging that their frameworks will evolve as their needs grow. For example, one respondent shared, "Our company is still developing our definition of governance—it will likely transform significantly in the next year."

These diverse definitions reflect the different stages of governance maturity and priorities across industries. Whether focusing on streamlining access, ensuring security, or driving business value, data governance is increasingly seen as a strategic practice tailored to each organization's unique goals.

## How the definition of governance has evolved

Organizations are not only defining governance differently but are also shifting how they approach its role and implementation to meet evolving needs.

### How has the definition of data governance evolved in your organization over the past year?

43%

Highlighted an **increased focus on democratization and accessibility**, reflecting efforts to ensure data is usable across teams.

24%

Noted a shift toward **agility and faster decision-making**, integrating governance into workflows that support rapid business needs.

17%

Emphasized a greater focus on **data security and privacy**, indicating the continued importance of safeguarding sensitive data.

16%

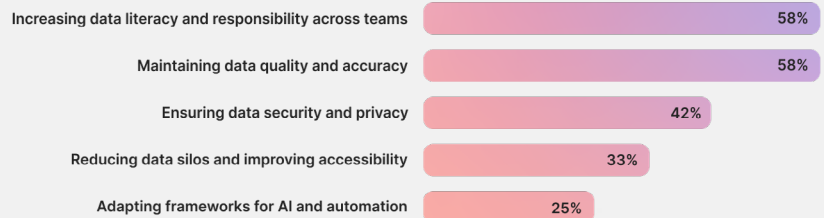
Pointed to expanded efforts in **ethical considerations**, particularly with the rise of AI.

These findings show that governance is evolving from a compliance-focused framework to a strategic tool that supports collaboration, agility, and innovation. Organizations are now prioritizing accessibility, security, and adaptability to meet the demands of modern data environments.

## Challenges in modern governance

Despite varying priorities, one shared challenge for organizations is balancing rigorous governance practices with the fast-paced demands of business. This tension is especially pronounced in revenue-driven teams, where speed is critical but data reliability and compliance cannot be compromised.

Reflecting on 2024, what key governance challenges will shape your approach in 2025?



Key governance challenges in 2024 | Secoda

58%

### Increasing data literacy and responsibility across teams

Ensuring that all stakeholders, not just technical teams, understand and uphold governance practices is a major priority.

58%

### Maintaining data quality and accuracy

Organizations recognize the need to preserve the integrity of their data even as they scale.

42%

### Ensuring data security and privacy

As the regulatory landscape evolves, safeguarding sensitive data remains a top concern.

**“The incentive of one group is to slow down and be careful and do the right thing, and the incentive of the other group is to ship as quickly as possible.”**



**Chad Sanderson**  
CEO, Gable.ai

**33%**

**Reducing data silos and improving accessibility**

Breaking down barriers to data access while maintaining control is a persistent challenge.

**25%**

**Adapting frameworks for AI and automation**

Governance frameworks must evolve to handle the growing influence of AI and automation on data workflows.

These challenges reflect the tension between business speed and meticulous governance. Revenue-driven teams often prioritize speed, while governance teams emphasize caution. This was also echoed during [recent panel discussions](#). Chad Sanderson, CEO at Gable.ai, noted: “The incentive of one group is to slow down and be careful and do the right thing, and the incentive of the other group is to ship as quickly as possible.”

Balancing these competing priorities requires not only cultural alignment but also the right tools and best practices to seamlessly integrate governance into fast-paced workflows. In the next section, we explore the most popular tools organizations use to streamline governance and foster collaboration.

# 4

# Tools and practices in modern governance

## Popular tools

Data governance relies on a variety of tools to streamline workflows, ensure data accuracy, and foster collaboration. Organizations use a mix of widely adopted solutions and emerging practices to address their governance needs.

### What are the primary tools or practices you use for data governance?

83%

#### Data cataloging tools

Data catalogs help organizations centralize metadata, improve discoverability, and increase transparency. Many use initiatives like "Tech Debt Days" to document dashboards and reports, ensuring workflows are ready for new projects. Integrations with tools like Slack make collaboration easier by allowing users to ask questions directly in their workspace and reduce repetitive queries.

58%

#### Self-service data documentation

Documentation tools allow teams to access trusted data without relying on technical staff. Real-time integrations, like Slack-enabled catalogs, make it easier for users to find and use documentation when needed to resolve issues.

58%





#### Data lineage tracking

Lineage tools map data sources and transformations to ensure accuracy and traceability. These tools are especially useful in environments where data changes frequently, helping teams quickly identify and resolve issues.

Secoda's Catalog feature

## Catalog

 Search resources

<input type="checkbox"/> Title	Integration
<input type="checkbox"/> Average order value	 Looker
<input type="checkbox"/> Orders dashboard	 Looker
<input type="checkbox"/> customers	 Looker
<input type="checkbox"/> dim_order_details	 Snowflake

**Data quality monitoring**

42%

Monitoring tools are used to validate and maintain data accuracy as pipelines scale. Solutions like Secoda DQS and dbt tests help organizations ensure reliable data transformations and pipeline stability.

**Data contracts**

17%

Data contracts are an emerging practice that defines agreements between data producers and consumers. These contracts promote accountability and trust, and while they are not yet widely adopted, they are gaining traction in organizations focused on improving collaboration.

The response data shows that organizations often combine multiple tools to meet their governance needs. Data catalogs and lineage trackers are commonly used to improve data transparency and reliability. At the same time, newer practices like data contracts are becoming more popular as organizations prioritize collaboration and accountability.

By integrating these tools into workflows, organizations can address governance challenges, improve collaboration, and ensure data is reliable and accessible.

## Embedding governance into daily workflows

To make governance a seamless part of an organization's culture, it must align with existing workflows, foster collaboration, and leverage automation to reduce manual effort. By embedding governance early in the data lifecycle—often referred to as "shifting left"—teams can minimize risks, improve consistency, and build trust in their data.

**"With SQLMesh, governance becomes part of the process, ensuring that changes propagate naturally and safely."**



**Toby Mao**

Co-founder and CTO, Tobiko

Automation plays a critical role in embedding governance into workflows. Tools like SQLMesh incorporate features such as version control, automated testing, and lineage tracking to ensure governance happens naturally as part of existing processes. As [Toby Mao, Co-Founder and CTO of Tobiko](#) shared, "With SQLMesh, governance becomes part of the process, ensuring that changes propagate naturally and safely." By integrating automation, teams can focus more on business outcomes while scaling governance seamlessly.

Collaboration is another key component of effective governance. Embedding tasks like documentation updates and quality checks into everyday team activities helps create shared accountability. For example, teams using [Hex](#) dashboards often include governance checkpoints in peer review templates, ensuring documentation is consistently updated as part of their workflow. This eliminates the need for inefficient "cleanup" days, making governance a natural and continuous practice.

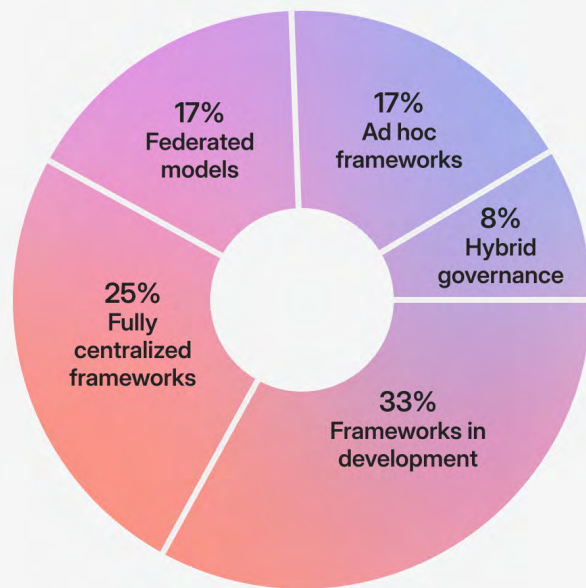
Proactive integration is also essential. When governance is introduced at the start of the data lifecycle, sensitive data handling and access control policies guide teams from the beginning, reducing downstream risks and improving efficiency. This approach ensures that governance becomes a built-in safeguard rather than an afterthought.

By combining automation, collaboration, and proactive practices, organizations can efficiently scale governance while maintaining data quality and compliance. For more actionable strategies to embed governance effectively, [check out this article](#) on embedding governance into workflows. The foundation of embedding governance lies in how frameworks are structured, which varies significantly across organizations. In the next section, we explore the diverse data governance frameworks organizations use to align governance with their unique needs and goals.

## Data governance frameworks

Strong data governance ensures security, compliance, and easy access while helping teams work more effectively. Organizations take diverse approaches to structuring their governance frameworks, tailoring them to meet specific goals and operational needs.

**How would you best describe your organization's current data governance framework?**



Current data governance frameworks in organizations | Secoda

### Frameworks in development

**33%**

The largest group of respondents indicated that they are still building or updating their governance systems. These organizations are focused on improving processes, addressing current challenges, and preparing to meet future demands. This transitional phase reflects the evolving nature of governance as a strategic priority.

**25%****Fully centralized frameworks**

In centralized models, a single team manages all governance decisions and policies. This approach provides strong control over compliance and security, ensuring consistent standards across the organization. However, it can slow down decision-making, especially for teams that require quick access to data.

**17%****Federated models**

Federated frameworks distribute governance responsibilities across departments, allowing teams to manage their own data access while maintaining centralized oversight for consistency. This approach balances autonomy and control, making it a good fit for larger organizations with diverse data needs.

**17%****Ad hoc frameworks**

Some organizations rely on informal or minimally structured governance. While this approach allows for quick decision-making and adaptability, it often leads to risks as companies scale and face stricter regulatory requirements. Ad hoc models are usually a stepping stone to more formalized systems.

**8%****Hybrid governance**

Hybrid frameworks combine centralized oversight with team-specific autonomy. This model provides the best of both worlds, enabling flexibility where needed while maintaining centralized control for critical compliance and security measures. It's particularly effective in environments that require adaptability without sacrificing accountability.

The survey highlights the ongoing evolution of governance frameworks. While centralized models remain common for ensuring security and compliance, many organizations are shifting toward federated or hybrid approaches to balance control with the need for agility and collaboration. The prevalence of frameworks still in development (**33%**) suggests that governance is increasingly seen as a dynamic process, requiring continual refinement to address new challenges such as AI integration, data democratization, and scalability.

For organizations in transition, the key is to adopt frameworks that not only meet current needs but also scale effectively as data ecosystems grow more complex. By aligning governance structures with business goals, companies can ensure that their frameworks support both operational efficiency and long-term adaptability.

## Governance models in practice

The effectiveness of a governance framework lies in its ability to align with an organization's structure and goals while remaining adaptable to evolving needs. Companies implement governance models in practical ways to achieve this balance:

In a centralized model, companies often establish governance committees to oversee policies, compliance, and regulatory alignment. For example, a global financial institution might use a centralized committee to enforce consistent data privacy policies across all regions, ensuring compliance with regulations like GDPR and CCPA. These committees also regularly update policies to address emerging challenges, such as ethical AI considerations or changes in data sharing agreements.

Organizations with federated models often empower teams to manage access and decision-making while maintaining oversight at a higher level. For instance, a healthcare provider might allow individual departments—like patient services and clinical research—to control access to their data while central

Secoda's Custom Roles feature

## Members and permissions

Members 24

Groups 8

Roles 4

Q Search roles

Role

### Salesforce admins

Allow Sales team leads to manage Salesforce data

### Database specialists

Enable DBAs to oversee integrations and view synced table

governance ensures compliance with HIPAA regulations. This model speeds up decision-making and reduces bottlenecks without sacrificing security.

In decentralized models like data mesh, companies delegate governance to the teams that produce and use the data. A tech company might assign ownership of product analytics data to the engineering team, who documents and governs it using agreed-upon organizational standards. This approach allows faster iteration and innovation while ensuring consistency through shared policies and regular cross-team syncs.

Regardless of the model, governance frameworks must be scalable and proactive. Regularly assessing your framework helps identify gaps or bottlenecks, ensuring it evolves to meet increasing data complexity, stricter regulations, and changing business needs. By balancing control with team autonomy, organizations can align governance with their goals, fostering collaboration, security, and operational efficiency.

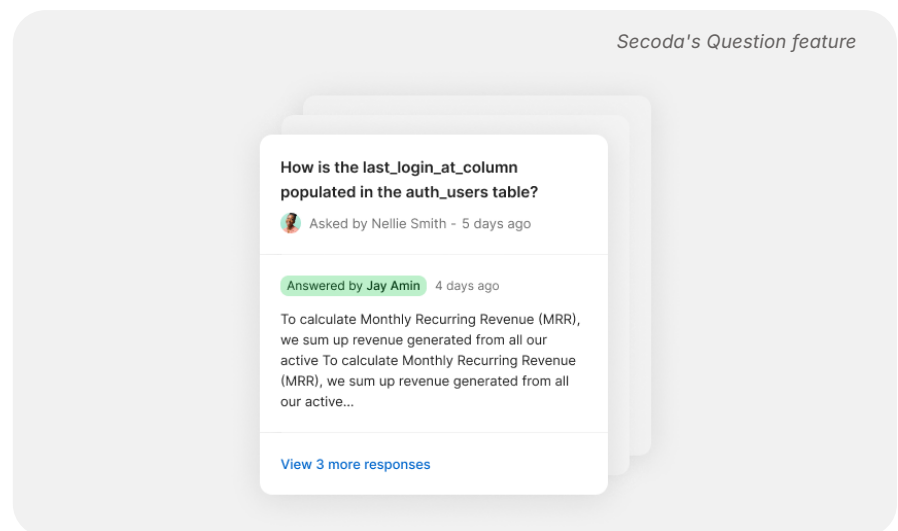
## Measuring governance success

Understanding how well these frameworks perform requires robust metrics and feedback loops. Metrics and feedback loops help organizations refine their strategies and address gaps. By combining stakeholder insights with quantitative measures like uptime, lineage health, and workflow trends, teams can build a complete picture of governance effectiveness.

Stakeholder surveys are a valuable tool for gauging how effectively governance policies are being adopted. By tracking the balance between proactive and reactive tasks, teams can identify opportunities to reduce inefficiencies and focus on initiatives that deliver long-term value. Trends in governance-related incidents also highlight emerging risks and areas needing immediate attention.

Metrics such as data uptime and lineage health provide a clear baseline for measuring governance success. Reliable data lineage and high uptime not only indicate operational stability but also demonstrate how well governance practices

are functioning. Support workflow trends provide actionable insights into how governance resources are being utilized. For example, tracking the number of resolved questions through Secoda's documentation can highlight areas where users frequently seek guidance, revealing gaps in existing governance policies or resources.



By addressing these gaps, organizations can continuously improve documentation and governance workflows, ensuring they meet evolving user needs.

Together, these insights enable organizations to measure governance success holistically, aligning their frameworks with operational goals and improving collaboration, decision-making, and overall trust in data.

With clear metrics in place, the next step is understanding how governance frameworks directly impact business outcomes. In the following section, we explore how organizations are leveraging governance to reduce risks, enhance operations, and drive growth.

# 5

# Business impacts of governance frameworks

Data governance frameworks offer organizations more than just operational improvements—they create opportunities for meaningful growth by reducing risks, enhancing collaboration, and enabling smarter decision-making. Organizations are seeing meaningful changes in their business outcomes thanks to governance frameworks.

### How has data governance impacted your organization's ability to achieve key business outcomes?

**50%**

#### **Better collaboration**

Governance frameworks provide teams with access to consistent, reliable data, breaking down silos and fostering effective collaboration. This enables cross-functional teams to align on objectives and make decisions more efficiently.

**33%**

#### **Faster, smarter decisions**

By improving data quality, governance frameworks empower organizations to make quicker and more accurate decisions. Reliable governance reduces delays caused by data inconsistencies, helping businesses adapt to changing demands.

**25%**

#### **Lower compliance risks**

Strong governance frameworks ensure adherence to regulations and industry standards, reducing the risk of fines or reputational damage. Automated compliance monitoring also minimizes manual effort while maintaining accuracy.

## TRANSFORMCO

Transformco, one of the largest integrated retailers in the US, focuses on seamlessly connecting digital and physical shopping experiences to serve its members. By implementing a governance framework that emphasizes dataset traceability, Transformco vetted data before it entered AI workflows, stabilizing operations and building trust in AI-generated insights.

### 17%

#### Increased data literacy

Governance frameworks empower teams across the organization to manage and use data responsibly. This promotes a culture of data-driven decision-making, where everyone can contribute to and benefit from the organization's data ecosystem.

### 15%

#### Improved customer experiences

With structured and trusted data, organizations can deliver personalized strategies that resonate with customers. This leads to more targeted marketing, better product recommendations, and enhanced customer satisfaction.

These findings show that governance frameworks are evolving from risk management tools into strategic drivers of business success. Organizations that align governance with their objectives are seeing tangible benefits, such as stronger collaboration, better customer experiences, and greater agility. By enabling teams to work more efficiently and ensuring data reliability, governance becomes a foundation for both day-to-day operations and long-term growth. This shift highlights governance as not just a compliance mechanism, but a key enabler of competitive advantage and innovation.

### Reducing risks with reliable data

One of the most critical advantages of governance frameworks is mitigating risks in complex data environments. As generative AI becomes more widely adopted, the use of trusted datasets is essential to avoid errors and reputational harm. Transformco, one of the largest integrated retailers in the US, focuses on seamlessly connecting digital and physical shopping experiences to serve its members. By implementing a governance framework that emphasizes dataset traceability, Transformco vetted data before it entered AI workflows, stabilizing operations and building trust in AI-generated insights.



At Loop Returns, introducing Secoda led to a 100% increase in active users and over 1,000 resource views in a month, demonstrating how accessible tools drive adoption and improve data engagement.

Governance frameworks also improve the dependability of data, enabling teams to act confidently and efficiently. Transformco's efforts to centralize and streamline data processes resulted in a 30% reduction in the time required for supply chain and inventory analysis, allowing faster decisions and smoother operations.

### **Empowering teams with self-service tools**

Governance frameworks are transforming how teams access and use data by promoting self-service capabilities. Tools like Secoda empower employees to independently find and utilize the data they need, reducing reliance on data teams. At Loop Returns, introducing Secoda led to a 100% increase in active users and over 1,000 resource views in a month, demonstrating how accessible tools drive adoption and improve data engagement.

Self-service capabilities also allow data teams to focus on more strategic tasks. Analysts at Loop Returns, for instance, now address complex, high-value inquiries instead of repeatedly handling basic queries. This shift not only improves efficiency but also highlights the long-term value of empowering teams with the right tools.

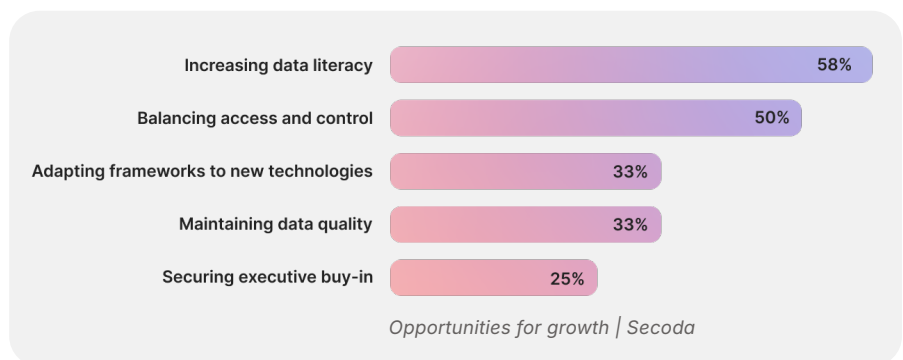
### **Increasing agility through autonomy**

Effective governance frameworks foster agility by enabling teams to act independently while maintaining oversight. IQVIA, a publicly traded global leader in healthcare analytics and technology, implemented a governance framework that gave teams tools to access relevant data insights on their own. This reduced routine requests and allowed the central data team to focus on high-priority projects. By promoting autonomy and trust, IQVIA improved decision-making speed across departments and increased operational efficiency.

# 6

# Challenges and opportunities in governance

While governance frameworks drive significant business value, organizations continue to face challenges that require strategic focus and innovation. The [lessons of 2024](#) underscore key priorities for the year ahead as companies adapt to evolving regulations, technologies, and business needs. Survey respondents highlighted several persistent challenges and opportunities for improvement:



### 1 Balancing data access with control

Finding the right balance between data accessibility and governance remains a critical challenge. Half of the survey respondents reported difficulties managing this trade-off, emphasizing the tension between enabling fast decision-making and maintaining robust controls. While 25% of organizations rely on strict governance frameworks to mitigate risks, these controls can create operational friction if not carefully implemented. Developing adaptive frameworks that balance speed and security will be a key focus for organizations in 2025.

### 2 Adapting frameworks to new technologies

The rise of AI and automation is transforming governance requirements. Organizations are rethinking their processes to ensure governance evolves alongside these technological advancements, safeguarding sensitive data while enabling innovation. Flexible governance models, such as those that incorporate real-time monitoring and automated compliance, offer a significant opportunity to support these changes effectively.

Secoda's Data Quality Score feature

#### Quality score

75%

Good

○ Accuracy	15 / 25
○ Reliability	20 / 25
○ Stewardship	10 / 20
✓ Usability	30 / 30

### 3 Increasing data literacy and responsibility

Building a culture of data literacy and accountability is a top governance priority, with **58%** of respondents citing a lack of data literacy as a barrier. This challenge highlights the need for education on governance principles and the role of teams in maintaining data integrity. Organizations can address this gap by integrating training into workflows and fostering shared responsibility for governance outcomes.

### 4 Maintaining data quality and accuracy

Poor data quality remains a persistent issue, undermining the effectiveness of governance frameworks. For **33%** of respondents, limited resources and tools pose a significant challenge in addressing data inconsistencies. To tackle this, organizations are investing in technologies and processes that proactively ensure data accuracy, making consistency a priority for governance leaders.

### 5 Securing executive buy-in

Governance initiatives often face resistance when viewed as "red tape." Survey respondents noted that **33%** of organizations struggle to gain executive support, underscoring the importance of demonstrating ROI. By linking governance to tangible business outcomes—such as faster decision-making or reduced compliance risks—leaders can build stronger cases for executive buy-in, ensuring governance remains a strategic priority.

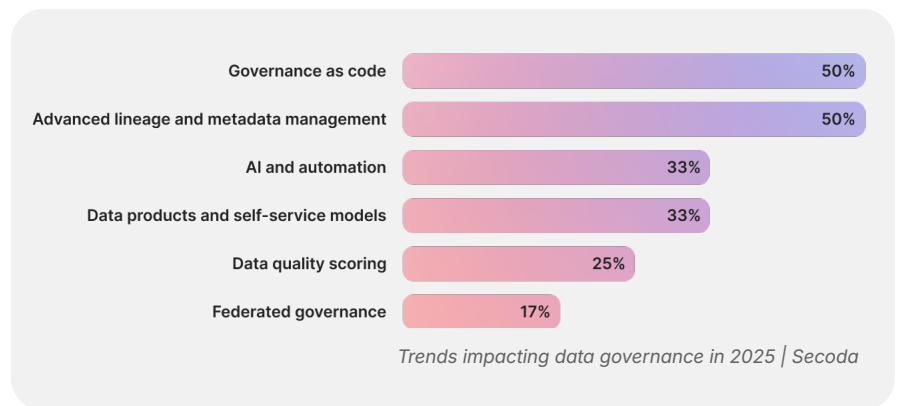
Organizations are leveraging innovative tools and approaches to balance data access with control, adapt to new technologies, and build cultures of accountability. As they refine their governance strategies, emerging trends are reshaping the future landscape of governance.

# 7

# Emerging trends to watch in 2025

The future of data governance is defined by advancements in technology and evolving cultural priorities. These shifts are driving greater efficiency, enhanced security, and stronger collaboration.

### What trends or technologies do you anticipate will most impact data governance in 2025?

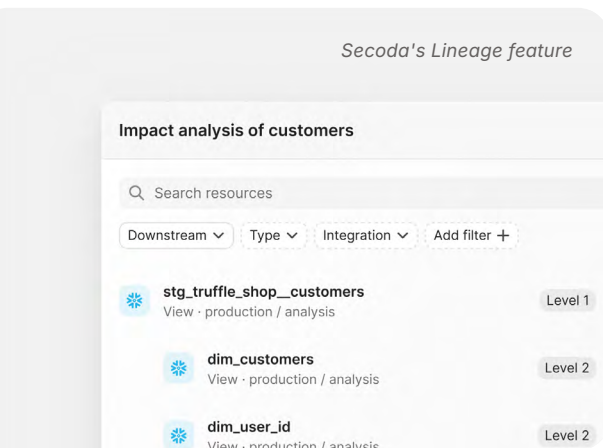


#### 1 AI and automation

AI-driven tools streamline processes like data discovery, lineage tracking, and real-time quality checks, making governance scalable and effective. With **33%** of respondents highlighting AI for data quality automation as a game-changer, expect broader adoption of machine learning in automating governance workflows and improving data reliability.

#### 2 Governance as code

Embedding governance into workflows through data contracts and semantic layers ensures consistency and agility. This was cited by **50%** of respondents as a transformative trend. Automating policies like role-based access and PII handling ensures consistency, transparency, and real-time enforcement, aligning governance with modern development practices.



### 3 Data products and self-service models

Treating data as a product fosters usability, accessibility, and collaboration across teams. This trend, supported by **33%** of respondents, reflects a push toward standardized frameworks prioritizing quality and accessibility, empowering teams to work more efficiently.

### 4 Advanced lineage and metadata management

With **50%** of respondents identifying advanced lineage tracking as a key area of impact, expect tools that provide deeper visibility and traceability of data flows. This capability enhances accountability, improves operational efficiencies, and ensures compliance with evolving regulations.

### 5 Data quality scoring

Quantifying data health through scoring systems enables teams to proactively identify and address weaknesses, fostering accountability and trust. AI-driven tools for real-time monitoring amplify these efforts, ensuring continuous improvement in data governance practices.

### 6 Federated governance

Combining team autonomy with centralized policies balances flexibility and control, crucial for large organizations. Federated governance balances team autonomy with organizational alignment, leveraging data contracts to foster accountability and agility.

These trends reflect a growing focus on democratization, accountability, and innovation in governance. They highlight how organizations are evolving their approaches to meet the demands of modern data environments while leveraging cutting-edge technologies and cultural shifts. For a deeper dive into these emerging strategies and actionable insights for 2025, check out our [blog](#).

# 8

# Strategies for building effective governance frameworks

While emerging trends set the stage for innovation, creating a strong governance framework requires actionable strategies tailored to your organization's needs. Building effective governance frameworks starts with a focused approach, demonstrating early value, and embedding governance into daily workflows. By starting small and scaling strategically, organizations can lay the foundation for governance practices that drive trust, collaboration, and measurable results.

## **Start small, scale strategically**

Effective governance doesn't require tackling the entire data ecosystem at once. Instead, success begins with focusing on high-impact datasets—those most critical to decision-making. Prioritizing these key areas ensures that governance efforts are targeted where they will have the most immediate and tangible effect. For example, accurate and accessible core datasets reduce inefficiencies and repetitive data requests, empowering teams to operate more independently.

Concentrating on foundational datasets also allows organizations to demonstrate the value of governance early. Teams can highlight benefits such as improved data accuracy, usability, and decision-making speed, building trust among stakeholders. These early wins not only secure buy-in but also lay the groundwork for expanding governance practices to the broader organization.

## **Tailor approaches to organizational needs**

Governance strategies must align with an organization's specific requirements, ensuring a balance between immediate impact and long-term scalability. Teams should start with datasets that are most frequently used for critical decisions, ensuring they are well-documented and accessible. This targeted approach reduces inefficiencies and creates a scalable foundation that can adapt as the organization grows.

Examples highlight the value of starting small and going deep before scaling wide:

### TRANSFORMCO

Beginning with core datasets helped build trust across the organization, demonstrating clear results that secured buy-in for broader governance initiatives.

### loop

Targeting decision-critical datasets reduced repetitive questions, increased usability, and enabled self-service, ultimately delivering measurable ROI.

### IQVIA

Focusing on high-priority data assets established scalable and replicable governance models, allowing the organization to expand its framework without sacrificing quality.

## Embed governance and foster a collaborative culture

Data governance ensures reliable, secure, and accessible data, but embedding it into an organization's culture takes more than tools and policies. Success lies in aligning governance with daily workflows through collaborative, proactive practices that empower teams and foster accountability.

## What cultural practices have helped embed data governance in your organization's daily operations?

**53%**

Of organizations embed governance into workflows (e.g., peer reviews, checklists), showing the importance of seamless integration.

**25%**

Tie governance to team OKRs, aligning it with measurable goals to drive accountability.

**16%**

Use cross-functional governance committees to bridge priorities across departments.

**6%**

Invest in employee training, signaling an area for improvement in building foundational knowledge.

These results highlight a focus on operational efficiency but also reveal gaps in cultural alignment, particularly in skill-building and cross-team collaboration.

## Opportunities for improvement

### Proactive integration

Embedding governance early in workflows (e.g., during data lifecycle planning) minimizes risks and improves consistency. For instance, setting up governance checkpoints in dbt transformations ensures compliance before data reaches production.

### Collaboration and shared accountability

Cross-functional governance committees enable diverse teams—like marketing and data engineering—to align their

needs, such as tagging customer data or streamlining pipelines. This fosters ownership and transparency across the organization.

### **Visible wins to build trust**

Start with targeted initiatives, like resolving a data quality issue or improving lineage visibility. For example, a team reducing undocumented tables by 30% can showcase governance as a problem-solving tool, not an overhead burden.

## **Actionable practices**

### ✓ **Align governance with OKRs**

Tie goals to business outcomes, such as reducing data errors by 20% or achieving 100% verified datasets.

### ✓ **Enhance employee training**

Use workshops, gamification, or onboarding sessions to ensure teams understand governance principles.

### ✓ **Embed governance tasks into workflows**

Incorporate documentation updates or data quality checks into existing processes, like sprint planning or peer reviews.

### ✓ **Leverage committees for collaboration**

Create cross-functional groups to ensure governance reflects diverse priorities and needs.

### ✓ **Focus on proactive governance**

Address issues at the earliest stages, such as schema design or access controls, to reduce downstream risks.

Successful implementation of these practices requires a shift in how governance is perceived. By demonstrating tangible benefits and integrating governance naturally into operations, organizations can transform it from a perceived burden into a valued enabler of better decision-making and data quality.

# 9

# Final thoughts

Effective data governance is no longer just about compliance and control—it is a catalyst for agility, innovation, and scalability. As organizations navigate an increasingly data-driven world, robust governance frameworks enable them to act quickly, innovate responsibly, and grow sustainably.

The future of AI governance will go beyond automation and efficiency. Organizations must address ethical concerns, ensure transparency, and mitigate biases in AI-driven decisions. Governance frameworks will need to evolve, not only to manage data but to build trust in the systems and insights powered by it.

**For leaders considering their next steps, the path is clear:**

- ✓ Start small and focus on addressing immediate needs to build momentum.
- ✓ Embed governance into everyday processes so it becomes a natural part of the organization's culture.
- ✓ Prioritize transparency to earn trust and drive adoption across teams.

By adopting flexible and scalable frameworks—such as those offered by tools like Secoda—organizations can unlock the full potential of their data while ensuring it remains secure, accurate, and accessible. Now is the time to take action and position your business for long-term success in a world that increasingly relies on data to lead the way.

