

Get Started with ServiceNow governance

Frequently asked questions

Definition

What is “ServiceNow governance”?

Governance is a decision-making framework that defines how ServiceNow® strategy, portfolio, and technical decisions are made and who has the authority to make them.

ServiceNow recommends a governance model with three governance boards, each specializing in one type of decision-making (i.e. strategy, portfolio, or technical). Good governance streamlines the decision-making needed to clearly define how your organization should use and manage the Now Platform.

What’s the difference between your strategy, operating model, and governance?

Your *strategy* describes what you will do, in terms of both:

- The business outcomes and value you plan to capture
- The ServiceNow workflows you'll implement to realize outcomes and value

Your executive sponsor and/or [Center of Excellence and Innovation](#) leader should set and approve your strategy.

Your [operating model](#) shows how you will realize your business outcomes. It describes the capabilities you need to create and deliver value using the digital workflows you implement on the Now Platform.

Your *governance model* provides the decision-making rigor and clarity you need to make sure that your operating model works within the constraints of your business strategy and technical environment.

“Governance” sounds like bureaucracy and “red tape” – why is ServiceNow governance worth investing in?

ServiceNow governance is decidedly *not* about creating bureaucracy or “red-tape” in your organization. In fact, good governance should help your ServiceNow teams get work done *faster*, by providing clear direction and guidelines so they know where to focus.

ServiceNow governance also provides the effective decision-making processes needed to:

- Drive your transformation vision – Effective decision-making avoids wasted effort and prioritizes high-value projects by aligning ServiceNow strategy and investment decisions with your broader enterprise goals.
- Minimize technical and business risk – Governance is key to how you define and apply technical best practices to minimize risk and maintain platform integrity.

How is ServiceNow governance different from any other governance at our organization?

Most organizations already have an existing technology governance model. Unlike general, enterprise-wide governance, “ServiceNow governance” is designed specifically to help structure and streamline how your organization makes important, *ServiceNow-specific* decisions as you implement and manage the Now Platform.

While the scope of ServiceNow governance is limited to governing the Now Platform, it's critical that your approach fits with any existing technology governance requirements. For example, how will strategic decisions about how to use ServiceNow need to consider prevailing enterprise platform strategy? How does a ServiceNow-specific demand process align with the existing demand management process at your organization? How should ServiceNow be managed according to enterprise-wide architecture and security requirements?

In most cases, ServiceNow governance must comply with existing, enterprise-wide governance and standards.

Process / Implementation

When is the right time to get started with ServiceNow governance?

Start considering governance requirements when you build your business case for ServiceNow. Develop your governance plan in parallel with your ServiceNow roadmap and implementation plan to make sure you can support your vision and roadmap and that the end-state governance framework can be in place to guide work on the platform as it's delivered.

If you've already implemented ServiceNow, plan to setup ServiceNow governance before implementing additional products. Governance will provide invaluable structure as you expand how you leverage the Now Platform at your organization.

What do I need to get started with ServiceNow governance?

- Support from leaders who understand the value of implementing a ServiceNow governance approach at your organization.
- Someone to lead in defining the scope, direction, and goals for your governance program and to manage the governance implementation process at your organization.
- A list of the people and groups that should be involved in building and managing ServiceNow governance.

What needs to be set-up as part of a ServiceNow governance model?

ServiceNow recommends a governance model with three governance boards, each specializing in one type of decision-making, including:

- An Executive Steering Board with senior IT and business leaders to decide on the strategic vision for ServiceNow, oversee budget and resources, and make final decisions on the overall ServiceNow roadmap.
- A Demand Board with platform and process owners to decide on how to scope work and prioritizes the backlog to align it with the vision set by your Executive steering board.
- A Technical Governance Board with IT leaders and architects to set standards and guardrails for development on the Now platform, which help minimize technical risk.

Most organizations will define who needs to participate in each of these boards early on, so their selected board members can help design the decision-making processes, escalation paths, and policies needed to effectively govern the Now Platform.

For more detail, our [Success Workbook](#) walks through every step needed to implement ServiceNow governance.

Related resources

How can ServiceNow help?

Start by watching our [short overview video](#) to get smart fast (the description includes links to additional resources). In addition to our [ServiceNow governance resources](#) on the Customer Success Center, ServiceNow's Customer Outcomes group has deep experience in helping customers design and implement ServiceNow governance. Contact your Account Executive for more information.