

Continuously assess and improve governance performance

Best-in-class ServiceNow governance is dynamic: It evolves to reflect what you need to drive your business objectives. As with any minimum viable product, most organizations will likely discover over time that they need to iterate, optimize, and refine their minimum viable set of governance policies.

Determine how you'll revisit and improve governance over time to ensure that you can continue delivering value while mitigating risks.

Check your progress:

- Do you know how you will identify where governance is inefficient or failing and then improve?
- Have you thought about how to reduce the need to escalate decisions to governance boards?

If you did not answer "yes" to both questions above, complete these action steps:

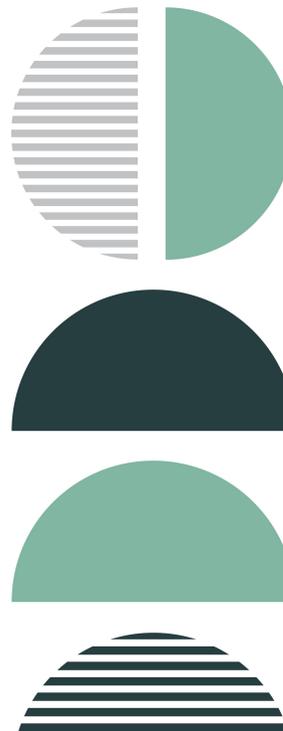
1. Conduct periodic governance audits.

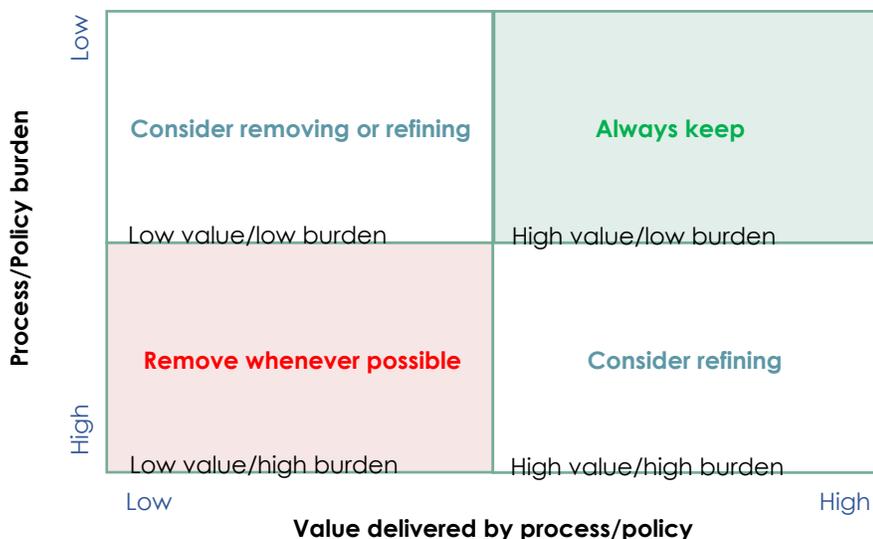
We've found that the best way to make sure you maintain the right amount of governance is to get your governance groups to periodically review where they can simplify their decision-making processes and policies. This goes beyond searching for where you can remove bottlenecks in approval processes. It involves auditing the portfolio of existing governance policies and processes and looking specifically for opportunities for simplification.

You can think about this as a governance audit with the goal of identifying where a process or policy adds value and should be preserved and refined, and where it's simply red tape and should be changed or removed.

We recommend setting a cadence for how often you conduct these audits. You should conduct one at least every time you start work on an upgrade, because upgrades can change how work is done on ServiceNow.

It can help to consider where specific governance processes or policies fall on a two-by-two chart (like the one on the next page) that plots the value a policy delivers against the burden that policy places on the organization in terms of administration and adherence.





Practitioner insight: Focus on maintaining the right amount of governance over time. Governance can quickly become a quagmire over time: Policies that aren't revisited and reevaluated can add up like technical debt, with similar consequences for cost and speed. To avoid this, you need to continuously work to maintain the right amount of governance—your set of defined policies should add more value, by clarifying decision-making and accountability, than they “cost” in terms of the time and effort required for organizational administration and adherence.

While you can (and should) periodically assess where policies can be removed or modified to maintain the right amount of governance, you should consider this every time new policies are defined. To do this, ask yourself the following two questions every time new governance policies are defined:

1. Does the value of this policy (such as the risk it mitigates or the speed it enables) outweigh its cost (such as the time and burden required for administration and adherence)?
2. After adding this policy, does our full set of policies deliver value that outweighs the cost of administrating and adhering to them?

2. Use what you learn from your governance metrics and audits to identify where to improve and streamline ServiceNow governance at your organization.

Your first priority should be to act on lessons learned from your governance audit. Present your relevant findings to each board and ask board members to approve any suggested policy and process modifications and removals. Then follow through according to their guidance.

Next, consider how else you can improve how quickly and efficiently governance works by:

- **Removing bottlenecks in governance decision-making** – Identify barriers that slow down your governance boards' ability to make decisions quickly. For example, do they always have the right information at hand to inform decisions? Is low board member participation preventing your boards from reaching final decisions? Resolve for these bottlenecks accordingly.
- **Empower local decision-making to avoid constant escalation to boards** – Review governance board agendas and identify recurring or boilerplate decisions that governance authorities should not have to continue spending time on. Then define and communicate policies to managers and individual contributors so they know how to adhere to standards and make decisions accordingly, without having to escalate the same questions to governance boards in the future.
- **Enable governance to flex to meet the changing needs of the organization** – Make a plan for collecting feedback from people in your organization about where governance is making their work harder and streamline governance to address concerns where possible.