DATA GOVERNANCE STANDARD

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Document Title:	Data Governance Standard
Document Ref. Number:	DoH/ST/DGS/DDGO/V1/2025 — Version: V1
New / Revised:	New
Publication Date:	October,2025
Effective Date:	May 2026
Document Control:	Strategic Affairs Sector
Applies To:	All DoH Offices, Centers, Sectors & Organization Unit, Abu Dhabi Healthcare Ecosystem
Owner:	DoH Data & Digital Governance Office
Revision Date:	October 2028
Revision Period:	Every three years or as and when needed
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1. Standard Scope

The purpose of the Data Governance Standard is to set minimum requirements for the effective governance, of data within all business sectors at the Department of Health (DoH) and across the healthcare ecosystem in Abu Dhabi.

This standard provides authority, clarifies roles and responsibilities, and guides actions and decisions related to data governance implementation within the DoH (which includes sectors, divisions, centers, and offices) and across the healthcare ecosystem of Abu Dhabi (which includes healthcare facilities, providers, insurance companies, research institutions, pharmaceutical companies, service providers and health information exchange platforms).

The successful implementation of this standard is expected to lead to the creation of a well-structured, transparent governance framework that enhances compliance with data protection regulations and establishes mechanisms for data monitoring and auditing.

This standard is implemented in conjunction with the following protocols

1. Assign ecosystem data owner/data steward protocol
2. Ecosystem issue management and resolution protocol
3. Measuring and monitoring compliance protocol

2. Definitions and Abbreviations

No.	Term / Abbreviation	Definition
2.1	Abu Dhabi Healthcare Ecosystem	Healthcare facilities, providers, insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, health information exchange platforms, service providers, laboratories and research centers within Abu Dhabi's healthcare sector that generate, access, store, use, process and/or transmit health information.
2.2	Chief Data Officer (CDO)	Senior executive responsible for overseeing the management, governance, and utilization of data across the entity. The CDO ensures that data is used effectively to support decision-making, compliance with legal and regulatory standards, and the strategic goals of the organization.
2.3	Data and Digital Governance Framework	A set of guidelines and principles established by the DoH to govern the collection, usage, and protection of data within the healthcare ecosystem.
2.4	Data and Digital Governance Office (DDGO)	A centralized unit responsible for overseeing the management, security, and ethical use of data and digital assets. The DDGO drives strategies to improve data and digital governance, standardize practices, and align both with the organization's overall data and digital objectives.
2.5	Data Architecture	The data architecture represents the structure, processes, and systems involved in managing data
2.6	Data Custodian	The individual responsible to execute data-related initiatives and decisions associated with data management domains from a technical aspect. Serves as subject matter experts in information management, specializing in data systems/applications.

2.7	Data Domain	A logical grouping of related data elements or categories that share a common context and are governed by a specific set of standards, policies, and rules within an organization's data governance framework.
2.8	Data Governance Specialist	The individual responsible to develop and oversee the implementation of data governance frameworks, policies, Standards and processes. Works with stakeholders to ensure data accuracy, integrity, and security, facilitating data sharing, interoperability, and standardization while monitoring compliance.
2.9	Data Literacy	The capability to read, write and communicate data in a specific context, understanding data sources and data concepts, analytical and AI methods and techniques. Data literacy enables people to identify, understand and act on data within a business context to influence decisions or outcomes.
2.10	Data Owner	The individual responsible for overseeing data management practices within a specific domain, ensuring compliance with data governance standards and regulations.
2.11	Data Quality	The overall condition of data based on factors such as accuracy, completeness, consistency, timeliness, and relevance.
2.12	Data Steward	The individual responsible for managing and overseeing data usage and integrity within specific data domains, assisting Data Owners in resolving data-related issues.
2.13	Department of Government Enablement (DGE)	A government entity aligned with Abu Dhabi's growth strategy and ambitions and committed to providing enabling services to government entities, citizens, and residents of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
2.14	Department of Health (DoH)	The regulatory authority responsible for overseeing healthcare operations within the Abu Dhabi healthcare ecosystem. The DoH aims to ensure high standards of healthcare delivery, public health initiatives, and patient safety, while promoting innovation and continuous improvement within the healthcare system.
2.15	Digital Health Committee (DHC)	A strategic body within the DoH responsible for leading the data governance program, setting goals, approving strategies, ensuring regulatory compliance, and managing risks. The DHC also mediates escalated issues and reviews the overall effectiveness of data governance initiatives across the healthcare ecosystem.
2.16	Digital Product Owner (DPO)	The DPO is responsible for the end-to-end management of digital products within the healthcare ecosystem, including vision setting, stakeholder engagement, and ensuring alignment with entity's objectives and user needs.

2.17	DoH Executive Committee	A body of DoH responsible for overseeing the strategic direction, policies, and overall governance of the healthcare system in Abu Dhabi. The DoH Executive Committee ensures that the department's initiatives align with national health objectives, regulatory compliance, and operational efficiency. It provides leadership, approves major decisions, and reviews the performance of DoH entities to ensure the delivery of high-quality healthcare services across the ecosystem.
2.18	DoH's Data and Digital Governance Office (DoH's DDGO)	An internal department within the DoH responsible for supporting and executing the data and digital governance strategy. The DDGO ensures compliance with data management and digital health policies, standards, guidelines, and frameworks across the healthcare ecosystem, while driving initiatives that enhance the effectiveness of how healthcare data is defined, stored, used, and managed to support the DoH's objectives.
2.19	Entity	Any organization, institution, or individual that operates within the healthcare ecosystem of Abu Dhabi and is subject to data governance regulations and standards mandated by DoH.
2.20	Master Data	Consistent and uniform set of identifiers and extended attributes describing the core entities of the enterprise, which might include patients, providers, facilities, and assets
2.21	Metadata	Structured information that describes, explains, or provides context about a dataset, making it easier to find, manage, and utilize the data. It includes details such as the source, format, creation date, author, and relevant keywords, as well as any technical and administrative information necessary for effective data governance, access, and interpretation.
2.22	Reference Data	A type of data that provides context, meaning, or relationships to other data, typically consists of predefined, stable information used to classify, categorize, or standardize data across an organization's systems. It remains consistent over time and is used across multiple systems or applications to ensure uniformity, accuracy, and data integrity. Proper management of reference data helps prevent errors, reduce redundancy, and improve data quality across the organization.

3. Standard Content

3.1 Standard Statements

Outlined below are the fundamental standard statements governing the collection, usage, and protection of data within the DoH internal organization and across the Abu Dhabi healthcare ecosystem.

3.2 Data Governance Framework

3.2.1 The governing authority for data, and digital products within the DoH and the Abu Dhabi healthcare ecosystem shall be the DoH Data and Digital Governance Office (DoH's DDGO), led by the Data and Digital Governance Section Head. DoH'S DDGO operates under the oversight of the Digital Health Committee (DHC). It is responsible for establishing a data and digital governance framework that guides data and digital practices across the DoH and the broader Abu Dhabi healthcare ecosystem.

3.2.2 The Data and Digital Governance Framework shall include detailed descriptions of data governance roles, such as Data Owners, Data Stewards, and Data Custodians, outlining their responsibilities, reporting structure, escalation hierarchy, and operational metrics.

3.2.3 DoH's DDGO, as the data and digital governing authority within the Abu Dhabi healthcare ecosystem, ensures that all necessary data-related policies, standards, guidelines, protocols, and processes are defined and adopted for all data management domains throughout the ecosystem, in compliance with relevant data standards and regulations.

3.2.4 DoH's DDGO shall ensure that in establishing all data-related policies, standards, guidelines, protocols, and processes, it adheres to the policies, standards, and frameworks established by the UAE and Abu Dhabi data-related authorities, including, but not limited to, the Ministry of Health and Prevention (MOHAP), Department of Government Enablement (DGE) and Statistics Centre – Abu Dhabi (SCAD).

3.2.5 All entities within the Abu Dhabi healthcare ecosystem are required to follow the regulations set forth by the DoH's DDGO, ensuring compliance with the established data and digital governance policies, standards, processes, protocols and frameworks.

3.2.6 All entities across the ecosystem and all DoH internal stakeholders are required to adopt and align their data and digital governance frameworks with the DoH's guidelines.

3.2.7 DoH's DDGO shall foster stakeholder engagement and collaboration across the healthcare ecosystem to ensure the data and digital governance framework addresses the diverse needs and leverages the insights of all healthcare entities.

3.2.8 DoH's DDGO shall regularly review and update the data and digital governance framework, engaging with entities for feedback to ensure that the governance approach remains effective and responsive to new challenges, technological advancements, and regulatory changes.

3.2.9 DoH's DDGO shall collaborate with ecosystem entities to promote a culture of continuous learning and adaptation, ensuring that data governance practices evolve alongside emerging technologies and regulatory requirements. This collaborative effort will strengthen alignment across the healthcare ecosystem, enabling entities to adapt to governance changes efficiently.

3.2.10 DoH's DDGO shall manage data and digital governance practices within DoH while ensuring adherence to regulatory requirements.

3.2.11 All entities within the healthcare ecosystem shall have a comprehensive understanding of the data they possess.

3.2.12 The data lifecycle across data collection, storage, processing, consumption, and disposal activities shall be appropriately governed by entities.

3.2.13 DoH's DDGO shall take responsibility for planning, delivering, and conducting initiatives aimed at improving data governance literacy across the Abu Dhabi healthcare ecosystem. This includes ensuring all stakeholders understand their roles, responsibilities, and the importance of adherence to the data and digital governance framework.

3.3 Data Governance Bodies

3.3.1 To foster responsible data stewardship and effective governance practices, ensuring the integrity, security, and ethical use of data assets, DoH shall establish a robust data and digital governance model overseen by dedicated bodies. These include the establishment of the Digital Health Committee (DHC), relevant taskforces and working groups.

3.3.2 The DHC shall provide comprehensive oversight and strategic direction to align data and digital governance initiatives with the Department of Health and the Abu Dhabi healthcare ecosystem.

3.4 Data Ownership and Stewardship

3.4.1 All data within DoH and the Abu Dhabi healthcare ecosystem shall have an assigned Data Owner, accountable for overseeing and managing the Data Management practices within their respective data domains. Responsibility of ensuring assigning Data Owner lies with the senior management of the entity for the ecosystem, and with the DHC for DoH.

3.4.2 Data Owners should be senior representatives of business functions and are tasked with upholding the responsibilities defined by the data and digital governance framework, ensuring accountability for data governance requirements within their respective domains. This does not mean they exclusively "own" the data, but they are responsible for making decisions about specific datasets directly related to their business function.

3.4.3 The role of Data Owner may be assigned as an additional responsibility to an individual's current role or as a separate, dedicated position, depending on the entity's size, data complexity, and operational needs.

3.4.4 Senior management of entity shall ensure that Data Owners are provided with sufficient time and resources to fulfill their responsibilities effectively. The time commitment may vary significantly based on the entity's size, the data domain's complexity, and the volume of data governance activities.

3.4.5 Where applicable, Data Owners are required to appoint Data Stewards to assist in data management activities, including resolving data issues and highlighting risks within their respective data domains.

3.4.6 Data Stewards are responsible for ensuring the accurate and secure management of data within their respective domains. They ensure data governance policies and standards are upheld, and that data is effectively utilized to drive business value.

3.4.7 Entities shall appoint or designate Data Custodians responsible for the management of datasets. Data Custodians are responsible for executing data-related initiatives and managing data systems from a technical standpoint. They serve as technical experts, ensuring that data systems, security controls, and technology solutions align with data governance policies and the needs of the DoH and the Abu Dhabi healthcare ecosystem.

3.4.8 The role of Data Custodian may be assigned as an additional responsibility to an individual's current role, provided they have the required technical skills and capabilities, or as a separate, dedicated position, depending on the entity's size, data complexity, and operational needs. In cases where data systems are fully managed by outsourced vendors, the data custodian role shall be assigned to the relevant vendor resources to fulfill the required responsibilities.

3.4.9 The entity shall maintain a registry of data owners, data stewards and data custodians, subjecting it to periodic reviews and compliance checks from DoH's DDGO to ensure adherence to governance standards.

3.4.10 DoH's DDGO shall initiate requests for compliance reports from entities on their data governance activities periodically, including but not limited to the management of data assets, adherence to data quality standards, data access standards, data catalog and metadata standards, and records of any data-related incidents. This process ensures transparency and accountability in data governance practices.

3.4.11 The entity and DoH's DDGO shall discuss and address cross-sectoral data governance challenges, promoting collaboration and consistency in data management practices among various governmental entities within the healthcare sector.

3.4.12 The entity and DoH's DDGO shall establish a Data Ownership Working Group, comprising Data Owners or their representatives from each entity within the healthcare ecosystem. This group shall address compliance challenges and ensure that health data is managed and exchanged in alignment with the DoH's standards and regulatory requirements.

3.5 Issue and Risk Management

3.5.1 DoH's DDGO shall design an escalation hierarchy for raising data-related risks and issues through the centralized mechanism, ensuring effective management and resolution of such concerns within the healthcare ecosystem.

3.5.2 DoH shall act as the mediator and final decision authority to resolve any disputes related to data governance within the healthcare ecosystem. Issues should be reported to DoH's DDGO and escalated to DHC, as per the Annexure

3.5.3 DoH's DDGO shall document and track all data-related actions, decisions, issues, and resolutions of the data governance-related bodies in a data governance register to ensure transparency and accountability. The register's format and accessibility shall be defined to facilitate efficient data management and oversight.

3.5.4 DoH's DDGO shall implement a tiered issue classification system within its data governance framework to prioritize issues based on severity. Issues shall be designated as high, medium, or low priority, with corresponding response protocols to ensure that resources are efficiently and effectively allocated.

3.5.5 In the event of a high-priority issue, the impacted entity shall initiate immediate and decisive action to mitigate risks. Risks must be registered and prioritized. The resolution process for high-priority issues shall be expedited to prevent significant impact on data governance and healthcare services.

3.5.6 For medium-priority issues, the impacted entity shall engage in a systematic and timely resolution process, ensuring that these concerns are addressed promptly while managing the effective distribution of attention and resources internally or within the entity.

3.5.7 Low-priority issues shall be managed in a way that ensures they are addressed within a reasonable timeframe, without diverting critical resources from higher-priority concerns, but with sufficient attention to prevent escalation.

3.6 Change Management

3.6.1 Healthcare entities shall implement a change management plan to support the adoption of data standards. This plan shall cover at minimum, but not limited to:
- Communication: clear strategy to inform stakeholders of goals and updates of the plan
- Training: interactive sessions on standards, protocols, and tools for all users
- Awareness: ongoing campaigns to reinforce the value of data & digital standards
- Monitoring: regular evaluation of the plan's effectiveness and adjustments as needed

3.6.2 The DOH DDGO shall enforce standards for compliance monitoring to support reliable data for decision-making and digital transformation.

4. Key stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

Stakeholder Role	Stakeholder Key Responsibilities
Department of Health Data and Digital Governance Office (DoH's DDGO)	-Develop and manage the data and digital governance framework across the DoH and the Abu Dhabi healthcare ecosystem, ensuring alignment with relevant regulations and industry standards. -Create, maintain, and update policies, standards, procedures, and guidelines for data management, including but not limited to data quality, access, sharing, classification, catalog, etc. -Lead training sessions and awareness campaigns to ensure that stakeholders understand data governance principles and adhere to policies. -Organize forums and working groups to enable collaboration among ecosystem stakeholders for resolving data governance challenges. -Conduct regular audits and compliance assessments, issuing compliance reports and providing support for corrective actions where necessary. -Manage data-related risks and escalate issues for resolution, using a tiered issue classification system for prioritization. -Review governance frameworks, collect feedback, and collaborate with stakeholders to adapt governance strategies in response to emerging challenges and regulatory changes.
Department of Health Digital Health Committee (DoH DHC)	-Provide comprehensive oversight of data governance initiatives, aligning them with the overarching objectives of the DoH and its ecosystem. -Oversight key data governance policies, protocols, compliance reports, performance indicators; ensuring that data management practices meet regulatory and organizational standards. -Serve as the final authority for resolving escalated data governance issues and disputes within the ecosystem. -Conduct periodic reviews of data governance strategies, addressing emerging challenges and driving improvements in data governance practices.
Data Owner	Providing strategic guidance for the effective and responsible use of data. Lead advocacy efforts for effective data management initiatives within their respective business sectors. Ensuring enforcement and adherence to data-related policies, procedures, and standards within their domains to maintain data quality and integrity. Assigning Data Stewards within their domains, providing leadership, mentorship, and necessary resources to accomplish data-related initiatives. Escalating conflicts related to data ownership, risk observations, and data access issues to Data Ownership Working Groups.

	Collaborating with the Data Ownership Working Group and Data Custodians to achieve shared data governance objectives while tracking data literacy and implementing change management plans.
	Achieving set compliance metrics and ensuring the enforcement of DoH decisions.
	Requesting and approving large transformation initiatives related to data including metadata management initiatives.
	Managing and overseeing data assets to provide users with high-quality, easily accessible data.
	Approving access to data within their domains to ensure only authorized individuals can access the data.
	Regularly assessing data quality, security, and compliance metrics, and addressing issues in alignment with governance standards, ensuring that any risks or challenges are appropriately escalated and resolved.
	Own risks associated with the data and oversee the utilization of data within their designated domains.
Data Steward	Providing operational guidance for the effective and responsible use of data within their domains, ensuring alignment with organizational data governance policies.
	Ensuring adherence to data-related policies, procedures, and standards to maintain data quality, security, and integrity throughout the data lifecycle.
	Collaborating with Data Owners and other stakeholders to ensure data governance initiatives are effectively implemented and support business objectives.
	Supporting data-related initiatives by coordinating the management and stewardship of data assets, ensuring that data is properly classified, organized, and easily accessible for authorized users.
	Escalating data-related issues such as conflicts over data ownership, risks, and data access problems to the relevant Data Ownership Working Groups for resolution.
	Promoting data literacy within the organization by supporting change management efforts and ensuring stakeholders understand data governance practices and the importance of data quality.
	Monitoring data compliance and regularly assessing data quality, security, and governance compliance metrics. Addressing data-related issues and ensuring risks are identified, escalated, and mitigated.
	Coordinating with the DDGO and other governance bodies to provide regular updates and reports on data quality and governance performance, contributing to actionable insights and compliance reporting.
	Supporting metadata management initiatives, ensuring accurate definitions of data attributes and facilitating seamless data management across the organization.
	Enforcing compliance with decisions made by the DoH's DDGO and ensuring that established governance frameworks are properly implemented across their data domain.

Data Custodian	Executing data-related initiatives and decisions related to data management domains from a technical perspective, ensuring effective implementation of data governance strategies.
	Serving as experts in information management, specializing in specific data systems and applications. They provide technical expertise to ensure systems meet data governance standards and business needs.
	Designing and developing technology solutions to support data management, reporting, and analytics environments that align with the entity's operational needs and data governance policies.
	Implementing data management procedures and standards within systems and applications, ensuring they comply with policies defined by the DoH's DDGO.
	Enforcing access and security controls defined by Data Owners and Information Security team and aligned with data classification and protection requirements, ensuring proper data security.
	Collaborating with Data Stewards to address data quality issues, ensuring that systems and technologies support high-quality, accurate, and reliable data across domains.
	Analyzing the impact of data decisions on systems and applications and communicating these impacts to the broader technology team to ensure transparency and alignment with business objectives.
	Ensuring alignment of technology activities with business requirements and data governance policies, ensuring that information systems support the organization's strategic goals.
	Participating in the planning and development of data-related initiatives from a data system perspective, contributing to technical planning and system design.
	Providing insights to the DDGO, or its equivalent, and Data Stewards on the technical impacts of data-related decisions, ensuring that all technology solutions are sustainable and meet governance standards.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The entity shall establish a robust monitoring system to track and evaluate compliance with the standard. This includes using reliable metrics and measurements to assess the effectiveness of the implemented controls. The entity will annually report its compliance status, any deviations, and associated risks to the DoH. Risks related to non-compliance shall be recorded and managed appropriately. Regular internal audits and assessments shall be conducted to validate and verify compliance with the standard's requirements. Based on the outcomes of these monitoring and evaluation activities, the entity shall establish a continuous improvement process to adapt to emerging threats, technological changes, and evolving compliance requirements. Additionally, DoH will conduct periodic audits and technical assessments of all regulated entities, as relevant and applicable, to ensure compliance with the standard.

6. Enforcement and Sanctions

DOH may impose sanctions in relation to any breach of requirements under this Standard in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations of the Abu Dhabi Healthcare Sector governed by the UAE federal law

7. Relevant Reference Documents

No.	Reference Date	Reference Name	Relation Explanation / Coding / Publication Links
1	2025	DOH-Assign ecosystem data owner/data steward protocol-V1.0	https://www.doh.gov.ae/en/resources/standards
2	2025	Ecosystem issue management and resolution protocol	https://www.doh.gov.ae/en/resources/standards
3	2025	Measuring and monitoring compliance protocol	https://www.doh.gov.ae/en/resources/standards
4	2024	Abu Dhabi Healthcare Information and Cyber Security [ADHICS] Standard	https://www.doh.gov.ae/en/resources/standards
5		Abu Dhabi Government Data Management Policy	https://data.abudhabi/opendata/sites/default/files/AD-Gov-Data-Management-Policy-EN-v1.0.pdf