

The Govern-Before-You-Scale Self-Diagnostic

A free artifact of AI GOVERNANCE CHAIN™. The diagnostic is free. The audit that acts on it is the paid path.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

No prior knowledge is assumed. Every acronym used in this document is defined below.

AI: Artificial Intelligence

EU: European Union

EU AI Act: the European Union Artificial Intelligence Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689)

Who this is for

Any leader about to expand an AI system from a pilot or limited use to wide deployment. The moment just before scale is the single highest-leverage point in the entire AI lifecycle. A weakness that affects ten people in a pilot affects ten thousand at scale.

Why this exists (the WHY)

Scaling an ungoverned AI system does not multiply its value. It multiplies its exposure. Most organizations discover their governance gaps after scaling, when the cost of fixing them is highest. This ten-question gut-check surfaces your largest gap before you commit, in under ten minutes.

The WHAT: ten questions

Answer each Yes or No. Be honest. A confident No now is far cheaper than a forced one later.

1. 1. Do you have a written inventory of every AI system you operate, including purchased tools?
2. 2. Have you classified each system by the level of risk it carries?
3. 3. Is there one named, accountable owner for each high-risk system?
4. 4. Have you tested your highest-risk system for sycophancy, that is, does it hold a correct answer under pressure?
5. 5. Do you have an audit trail that records how key AI-influenced decisions were made?
6. 6. Do you know which regulations (such as the EU AI Act) apply to this system, and have you classified it accordingly?
7. 7. Do you have a written plan for what to do in the first hour of an AI incident?
8. 8. Are the people who will operate this system at scale trained on its limits?

9. 9. Do you monitor the system in production for drift or degrading performance?
10. 10. Could you demonstrate, with documentation, that this system was governed before it was scaled?

Reading your score

- - 8 to 10 Yes. You are genuinely ready to scale. Govern the remaining gaps and proceed with confidence.
- - 5 to 7 Yes. You have a foundation but real gaps. Close the No items before you scale, not after.
- - 2 to 4 Yes. You are not ready. Scaling now would multiply exposure faster than value. Pause and build the basics.
- - 0 to 1 Yes. Stop. Scaling an ungoverned system at this level is the most expensive mistake in AI. Start with the foundations first.

The principle this diagnostic protects

Govern before you scale, never after. Governance added before scale is a design choice. Governance added after an incident is damage control. The first is cheap and quiet. The second is expensive and public.

Where the free layer ends and the paid path begins

This diagnostic gives you the WHAT (your ten-point readiness) and the WHY (why pre-scale is the decisive moment). It tells you that you have gaps. It does not close them.

- - For the structured HOW: the AI Governance Operating System and the Stage-Gate framework.
- - For the WITH-YOU: The Governance Circle.
- - For the DONE-FOR-YOU: the Pre-Scale Governance Audit, where we run the full assessment with you and produce the readiness verdict before you commit to scale.

If this diagnostic surfaced gaps that concern you, that is exactly the signal the Pre-Scale Audit is built to act on.

Your next step: Get the **Pre-Scale Governance Audit** in the Execution Library (www.aigovernancechain.com/storefront.html, section: Recurring programs). Every instrument in the Execution Library is also included in the **Governance Vault**, the all-access annual licence.

AI Governance Framework

(c) 2026 Mathieu K. Gouanou. All rights reserved.

Member, Harvard Business Review Advisory Council.

Document standard for AI GOVERNANCE CHAIN™: human-first AI governance.