

A practical decision tool for boards, executives, CIOs, CISOs, legal, and compliance leaders evaluating an AI use case. Use it to determine **what the system is allowed to do, what governance level applies, and what evidence must exist** before deployment or continued operation.

STEP 1 — CLASSIFY THE USE CASE, IMPACT & AUTONOMY

AI USE CASE

Internal Productivity

Employee-Facing

Customer-Facing

Decision-Support

Automated Decision

Agentic / Autonomous

Security-Sensitive

Mission-Critical

IMPACT DIMENSIONS

Human

Business

Financial

Security

Privacy

Regulatory

Operational

Reputational

AUTONOMY LEVEL

L1

Assist — AI recommends; human decides.

L2

Recommend — AI evaluates; approval required.

L3

Execute With Approval — bounded initiation; human authorizes.

L4

Controlled Autonomous Action — executes within approved permissions & monitoring.

STEP 2 — MAP TO THE REQUIRED GOVERNANCE RESPONSE

STANDARD	ENHANCED	HIGH	EXECUTIVE / MISSION-CRITICAL
- Inventory entry - Named owner - Basic documentation - Approved use confirmation	- Risk assessment - Decision boundaries defined - Evidence requirements set - Human oversight point - Security / privacy review	- Formal authorization - Detailed decision record - Strong access controls - Continuous monitoring - Defined escalation path - Periodic reassessment	- Executive accountability - Formal authorization - Comprehensive evidence - Continuous assessment - Explicit operating boundaries - Incident response plan - Reassessment triggers - Documented approval to operate

STEP 3 — EXECUTIVE DECISION CHECKLISTSTEP 4 — RECORD THE DECISION

1

What business purpose does the AI serve?

2

What decision or action can it influence?

3

How autonomous is the system?

4

What data can it access?

5

What systems can it affect?

6

Who owns the outcome?

7

What happens if it is wrong?

8

What controls are required?

9

What evidence must exist?

10

What event triggers reassessment?

GOVERNANCE DECISION

☐ Approve

☐ Approve With Controls

☐ Require Additional Assessment

☐ Escalate for Executive Review

☐ Do Not Approve

DECISION OWNER

DATE

RISK CLASSIFICATION

REQUIRED CONTROLS

REASSESSMENT DATE

EXECUTIVE GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLE

AI governance should scale with the system's autonomy, impact, authority, and access.

NOTES