

A Comprehensive overview of NDMO Compliance

Empowering Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030: The Role of the National Data Management Office (NDMO) in Shaping a Data-Driven Future



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As Saudi Arabia moves forward with its ambitious Vision 2030, data has emerged as a cornerstone for fostering economic diversification, innovation, and social progress. The National Data Management Office (NDMO) stands at the forefront of this transformation, driving the development of a robust data governance framework that aligns with the Kingdom's strategic objectives. Through its focus on data quality, data management, and regulatory compliance, NDMO is setting the stage for a new era of digital collaboration, efficiency, and transparency across public and private sectors.

Our perspective aims to explore the critical role of NDMO in shaping Saudi Arabia's data-driven future. It delves into its strategic objectives, regulatory impact, and the broader implications for businesses operating in the Kingdom. By fostering a culture of data governance, compliance, and innovation, NDMO is positioning Saudi Arabia as a global leader in responsible data management, unlocking new opportunities for economic diversification and digital excellence.

As organizations in Saudi Arabia navigate this evolving regulatory landscape, we are committed to supporting discussions that drive meaningful compliance and innovation. This publication outlines our perspective, and we welcome the opportunity to engage further.



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UNDERSTANDING THE NDMO: BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

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The National Data Management Office (NDMO) operates as a key sub-entity of the Saudi Data & AI Authority (SDAIA), playing a central role in the Kingdom's data governance ecosystem. Recognizing data as a strategic national asset, NDMO is responsible for developing, implementing, and supervising policies, programs, and practices that enable entities across Saudi Arabia to effectively govern and enhance the value of data.

NDMO's mandate extends beyond regulatory oversight—it also focuses on digitizing, managing, and developing national data assets, ensuring that data-driven initiatives align with Saudi Arabia's economic and technological aspirations. A fundamental part of its mission is to safeguard personal and sensitive data by formulating comprehensive strategies, regulations, and compliance frameworks. Additionally, NDMO actively contributes to proposing new data-related policies, further strengthening Saudi Arabia's position as a leader in responsible data management.

Roles and Responsibilities of NDMO

- The National Data Management Office (NDMO) plays a critical role in shaping Saudi Arabia's data governance and compliance landscape. Its key responsibilities include:
- Policy and Standards Development – Establishing policies, governance mechanisms, standards, and controls for data and AI.
 - Compliance Monitoring and Measurement – Creating key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess government entities' adherence to data governance, management, and personal data protection regulations.
 - Enforcement and Oversight – Ensuring compliance with established regulations, standards, and policies through active monitoring and follow-ups.
 - Capacity Building and Skill Development – Strengthening national expertise in data management, governance, and personal data protection by fostering specialized skills and training initiatives.
- Through these responsibilities, NDMO drives Saudi Arabia's vision for a secure, efficient, and well-regulated data-driven economy.

Key Data Frameworks by NDMO

As the national regulator of data, the National Data Management Office (NDMO) has introduced comprehensive frameworks to standardize data governance practices across various entities. Among these, the **Data Management and Personal Data Protection Standards** serves as a foundational guideline, outlining key controls and requirements to ensure effective data management, governance, and compliance. This framework provides a structured approach to handling data responsibly while maximizing its value as a national asset.

A DEEP DIVE INTO THE DATA MANAGEMENT AND PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION STANDARDS

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The “**Data Management and Personal Data Protection**” framework provides a structured set of controls and best practices designed to enhance data integrity, governance, and the protection of personal information.

Covering the entire data lifecycle, the framework ensures that data is managed effectively from creation and utilization to disposal and elimination.

Structure of the NDMO Standard

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The framework is structured into 14 distinct domains, offering a holistic approach to data management and governance. It is organized into three hierarchical levels:



The standards include 77 controls and 191 control specifications, categorized based on implementation priority:



Key Requirements of the NDMO Standard

The framework is organized into five key areas each addressing key requirements that organizations must adhere to, ensuring robust data governance, protection, and transparency:

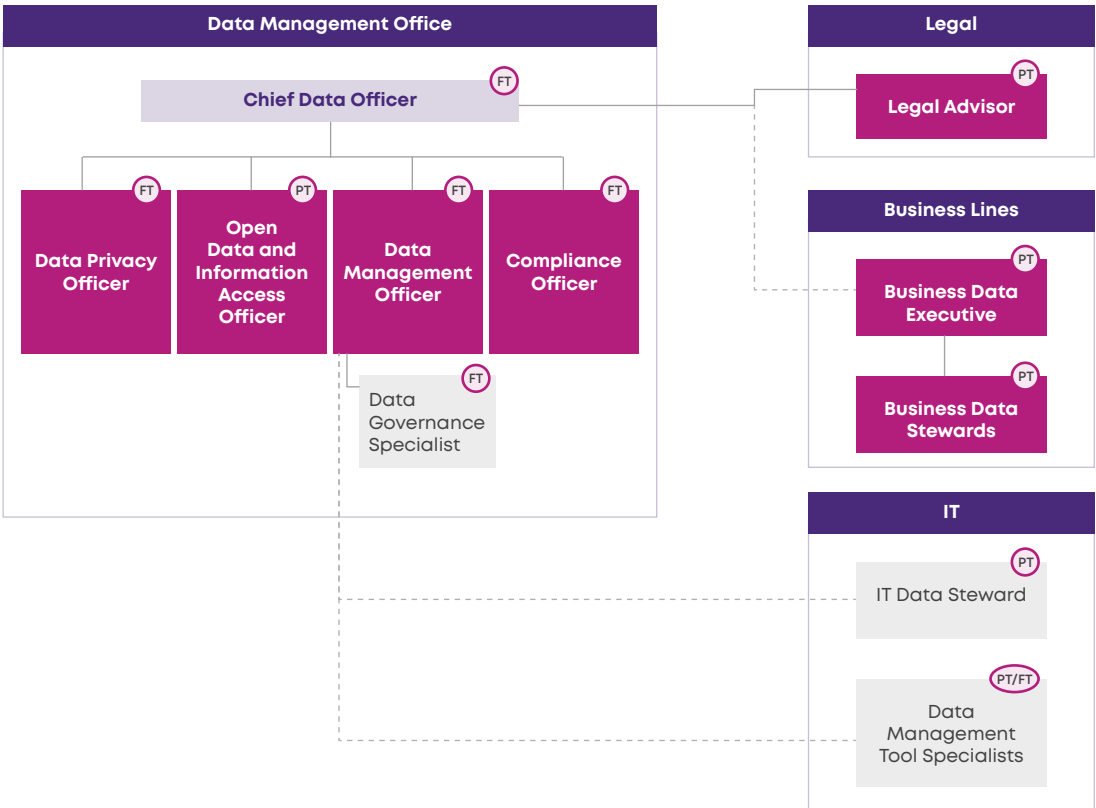
1. Data Governance

Data governance serves as the foundation of the NDMO framework, ensuring structured policies, roles, and responsibilities for managing data assets effectively. Organizations must:

- Establish clear governance structures with defined ownership and accountability.
- Implement policies and procedures for data stewardship, integrity, and decision-making.
- Align governance with regulatory requirements to ensure compliance and minimize risks.

1.1 Data Governance Organization Structure

As part of data governance, organizations should establish a Data Management Office and a Data Management Committee, and identify and appoint the relevant Data Governance roles



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2. Data Assetization

This domain focuses on the structured management of data assets to enhance their usability and value. Key requirements include:

- Developing data catalogs and metadata management to enable efficient discovery and tracking of data assets.
- Ensuring data quality to meet consumer requirements through accuracy, consistency, and reliability.
- Strengthening data operations and architecture to support seamless data integration and interoperability.
- Implementing master data management (MDM) strategies for consistency across systems.

3. Data Usage

The NDMO framework emphasizes maximizing the value of data while ensuring ethical and compliant usage. Key aspects include:

- Enabling business intelligence and analytics to drive data-driven decision-making.
- Establishing mechanisms for secure data sharing and interoperability across entities.
- Encouraging the adoption of open data policies, promoting transparency while maintaining security controls.
- Fostering data value realization by integrating insights into strategic and operational activities.

4. Data Classification and Availability

Proper classification ensures that data is categorized based on sensitivity, criticality, and access levels, improving availability while mitigating security risks. The key principles include:

- Implementing data classification frameworks to protect confidential and regulated information.
- Enhancing freedom of information to enable Saudi citizens' access to government information through a transparent request and appeal process

5. Data Protection

To safeguard personal and organizational data, the NDMO framework mandates stringent guidelines, particularly for sensitive and regulated information. The core focus areas include:

- Personal data protection measures by ensuring proper handling and preventing unauthorized disclosure.
- Data security and protection policies (as per NCA guidelines) to prevent unauthorized access, breaches, and cyber threats.
- Establishing data lifecycle management practices for secure storage, processing, and disposal.

By implementing this framework, NDMO ensures that organizations adopt structured, secure, and compliant data management practices, reinforcing Saudi Arabia's commitment to robust data governance and regulatory excellence.

DETAILED REQUIREMENTS PER DOMAIN AS PER NDMO STANDARDS:

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1. Data Governance (DG)

- Establish and implement a **Data Management (DM)** and **Personal Data Protection (PDP)** strategy and plan with **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**.
- Develop and implement **DM policies, standards, and guidelines** across all DM domains.
- Operationalize all required roles for the **Data Management Organization** as per NDMO controls.
- Implement **Change Management** practices, including awareness, communication, and capability development.

2. Metadata and Data Catalog (MCM)

- Develop and implement a plan to integrate and manage **Metadata** across the entity.
- Implement a **Metadata Management** and **Data Catalog** tool/solution.
- Define and implement formal processes for effective **Metadata Management**, including prioritization, population, access management, and quality issue management.

3. Data Quality (DQ)

- Develop and implement a **Data Quality (DQ)** plan focused on improving data quality.
- Establish and implement practices to manage and improve data quality, including **DQ issue management** and **remediation**.
- Monitor and report the entity's **Data Quality status** using predefined **KPIs**.

4. Data Operations (DO)

- Develop and implement a plan to manage **Data Operations**, including **Data storage** and **retention**.
- Define and implement **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** for **Database operations**.
- Establish and implement practices for **Business Continuity**, including **backup, disaster recovery (DR)**, and **Data retention**.

5. Document and Content Management (DCM)

- Develop and implement a **Document and Content Management (DCM)** plan, including a **Digitization** plan.
- Implement policies and processes for DCM, including **backup & recovery, retention & disposal**, and **access approval**.
- Implement a tool to support **DCM processes**, including **Digitization Management**.

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6. Data Architecture and Modelling (DAM)

- Develop and implement a plan to improve **Data Architecture** capabilities.
- Define and implement practices for **Data Architecture & Modelling**, including **Data Flows**, **Data Models**, and **Governance** considerations.

7. Data Sharing & Interoperability (DSI)

- Develop and implement a **Data Sharing and Integration (DSI)** plan in line with **Data Sharing Policies**.
- Define and implement processes for sharing data within the entity and with other entities.
- Implement a **Data Integration architecture** to manage data movement efficiently across systems and applications.
- Develop and implement **Data Sharing Controls** and processes for efficient data transformation and movement.

8. Reference and Master Data Management (RMD)

- Develop and implement a plan to improve **Reference & Master Data (RMD)** management capabilities.
- Define and implement processes to manage **RMD objects** from creation to archival.
- Implement a **Data Hub** or tool as the trusted source for **RMD Management**.

9. Business Intelligence and Analytics (BIA)

- Develop and implement a plan to manage **Business Intelligence & Analytics (BIA)** activities.
- Identify **BIA use cases** and define a plan for their implementation.
- Define and implement practices to manage and govern **BIA processes**.
- Implement the right tools, technologies, and skills to support **BIA use cases**.

10. Data Value Realization (DVR)

- Develop a plan to identify, document, and realize **Data revenue generation potential**.
- Implement practices to support a **Data revenue generation process**.
- Monitor and optimize **Data-related cost optimization initiatives**.

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11. Open Data (OD)

- Define and implement a plan to identify and coordinate the publishing of **Open Datasets**.
- Establish and implement processes to support the identification and publishing of **Open Data**.
- Monitor and optimize **Open Data** publishing processes.

12. Freedom of Information (FOI)

- Define and establish a plan to address compliance with **Freedom of Information (FOI)** regulations.
- Implement processes for managing **FOI requests**, including response and appeal processes.
- Monitor and optimize **FOI processes** for continuous improvement.

13. Data Classification (DC)

- Establish a plan for **Data Classification (DC)** as per NDMO standards.
- Define and implement processes for **Data Classification**, including identification, prioritization, and access management.
- Review and update **classified datasets** to ensure appropriate classification levels.

14. Personal Data Protection (PDP)

- Perform an initial **Personal Data Protection (PDP)** assessment and develop a plan to address privacy requirements.
- Define and implement **Privacy policies** and processes for **Personal Data**, including **Data breach identification, consent management, and risk assessments**.
- Monitor and optimize **PDP practices** for continuous compliance.

Continuous Monitoring:

- **Monitoring and Reporting:** For each domain, entities must monitor the effectiveness of their practices using predefined KPIs and generate monitoring reports to track progress.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Entities are expected to regularly review and optimize their processes, tools, and practices to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with NDMO standards.
- **Compliance Audits:** Periodic audits should be conducted to ensure adherence to the DM and PDP standards, and any non-compliance issues should be addressed promptly.

WHY SHOULD YOU COMPLY WITH NDMO STANDARD?

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Adopting the NDMO Data Management and Personal Data Protection Standards Framework offers organizations several strategic advantages, including:

- **Legal Compliance** – Ensure full adherence to Saudi data protection standards while fulfilling the ethical responsibility of safeguarding personal and government data.
- **Enhanced Data Governance** – Establish robust frameworks for data integrity, accessibility, and compliance to ensure responsible data management and regulatory alignment
- **Operational Efficiency** – Enhance data quality, strengthen governance, and optimize decision-making by implementing standardized and secure data management practices.
- **Competitive Advantage** – Position your organization as a trusted and compliant partner, enhancing credibility and market differentiation.
- **Avoid Costly Penalties** – Mitigate financial and legal risks by proactively complying with NDMO regulations and avoiding regulatory violations.

The NDMO Data Management and Personal Data Protection Standards Framework reinforces Saudi Arabia's commitment to global best practices in data governance while addressing the specific needs of KSA public entities. By adhering to these standards, organizations can strengthen data management, ensure regulatory compliance, and build greater resilience, ultimately enhancing their ability to operate securely and efficiently in the evolving digital landscape.

WHO NEEDS TO COMPLY WITH NDMO STANDARD?

The NDMO standard applies broadly to ensure the secure and effective management of government data across Saudi Arabia. It applies to:

Public Entities

All government entities, including ministries, regulatory bodies, and public sector organizations must comply with NDMO standards to ensure effective data management and protection.

Business Partners Handling Government Data

Private sector organizations that manage, process, or store government data, including vendors and service providers, are required to adhere to NDMO standards.

The framework governs the handling of all forms of government data in their custody, including paper records, handwritten documents, emails, maps, voice recordings, videos, photos and digital files. These regulations ensure that all entities managing such data adhere to stringent privacy, security, and governance standards in alignment with national policies and global best practices.

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WHAT ARE THE PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE?

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Organizations operating in Saudi Arabia must comply with the NDMO's standards as non-compliance can result in significant consequences. Penalties may include:

- **Regulatory Fines and Sanctions** – Non-compliance can result in substantial financial penalties, reinforcing the government's commitment to stringent data governance.
- **Legal Consequences** – Violations can result in legal actions, operational restrictions, or license suspensions.
- **Reputational Damage** – Data breaches and regulatory violations can erode stakeholder trust, affecting business relationships and growth.
- **Operational Disruptions** – Audits, investigations, and corrective actions can hinder business operations.

Given Saudi Arabia's strict approach to data governance, complying with NDMO regulations isn't just a formality—it's a necessity. Businesses that stay compliant not only avoid risks but also build trust and strengthen their position in the market.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR NDMO COMPLIANCE?

Achieving compliance with the National Data Management Office (NDMO) standards requires a strategic and proactive approach. Organizations should establish a structured roadmap that aligns with NDMO's key areas while integrating best practices for governance, management, and data utilization. The following steps outline an effective preparation strategy:

- **Assess Data Governance Readiness** – Evaluate current governance structures, identify gaps, and establish a governance committee to oversee compliance
- **Enhance Data Asset Management** – Maintain a data inventory, implement quality management tools, and ensure integration support compliance
- **Implement Secure and Ethical Data Usage** – Establish data-sharing policies, monitor usage for ethical compliance, and leverage analytics while maintaining security
- **Define Data Classification and Availability** – Enforce classification frameworks, implement access controls, and develop continuity plans for data resilience
- **Monitor, Audit & Continuously Improve** – Track compliance status, conduct periodic audits, and train employees on evolving regulatory requirements

By implementing these steps, organizations can ensure NDMO compliance while strengthening their data governance and data management.

COMMON CHALLENGES ORGANIZATIONS FACE IN NDMO COMPLIANCE

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Organizations striving to comply with NDMO's Data Management and Personal Data Protection Standards often encounter several challenges, including:

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- **Complex Regulatory Requirements** – Interpreting and implementing 191 NDMO specifications can be overwhelming and requires continuous updates to stay aligned.
- **Integration with Existing Frameworks** – Legacy infrastructure may struggle to support NDMO-compliant governance, requiring modernization and integration of new solutions.
- **Resource Constraints** – Organizations may lack skilled personnel, technology, or budget to implement robust data protection measures effectively.
- **Continuous Compliance Monitoring** – Tracking compliance in real-time is challenging without automated systems and AI-driven analytics to monitor metrics effectively.

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Overcoming these challenges requires a proactive approach, strategic planning, and often, external expertise to ensure compliance while strengthening overall data resilience.

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HOW WE CAN HELP YOU NAVIGATE NDMO STANDARDS

How to prepare for NDMO Compliance?

At Uniquis, we specialize in helping organizations navigate the complexities of data governance. Our unique value comes from leveraging AI and digital solutions, enabling us to offer cutting-edge approaches that go beyond traditional practices. Our innovative methods are designed to drive efficiency, enhance insights, and provide actionable strategies aligned with the evolving landscape of NDMO regulations. Here's how we can assist:

Common Challenges Organizations Face in NDMO Compliance

- **Data Assessment & Compliance Readiness** – Evaluate data management practices, identify compliance gaps, and develop a structured roadmap for NDMO adherence, including data classification and metadata management
- **Governance & Strategy Development** – Design and implement data security policies aligned with NDMO's governance framework, ensuring structured ownership and accountability
- **NDMO Implementation** – Integrate NDMO standards into your data governance, security, and compliance frameworks, including secure data-sharing policies and ethical data usage controls
- **Data Assetization & Quality Enhancement** – Develop structured data catalogs, enforce master data management (MDM) strategies, and improve data accuracy, consistency, and reliability
- **Technology & Automation for Compliance** – Leverage AI-driven monitoring, automate regulatory workflows, and generate audit-ready reports to streamline compliance efforts
- **Training & Organizational Readiness** – Provide tailored training for executives, employees and compliance teams to enhance governance and preparedness.
- **Ongoing Compliance Monitoring & Updates** – Offer continuous regulatory tracking, proactive risk management, and compliance adaptation to evolving standards.

How we can help you navigate NDMO Compliance

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By partnering with us, you'll experience a consulting approach that blends traditional expertise with digital innovation, helping you navigate NDMO's regulatory complexities while ensuring your security posture remains resilient and future-proof.

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(I) Case Studies: How We Have Enabled NDMO Compliance

As a trusted partner in data governance and compliance, we have helped organizations across various sectors successfully implement the Saudi National Data Management Office (NDMO) standards. Through tailored strategies and structured execution, we have enabled our clients to enhance regulatory compliance and establish robust governance frameworks. Below are some key success stories:

Pilgrimage-Focused Government Entity

Challenge: The client faced misalignment with NDMO standards, poor data quality, and fragmented data-sharing mechanisms, leading to inefficiencies and compliance risks.

Our Solution: We developed and implemented a comprehensive data governance framework, introduced centralized metadata management tools, and provided targeted compliance training to ensure alignment with NDMO requirements.

Impact: Strengthened data governance, optimized decision-making, and improved operational efficiency.

Tourism-Focused City Management Commission

Challenge: The organization struggled with undefined data ownership, siloed datasets, and a lack of governance awareness, resulting in inefficient data utilization.

Our Solution: We established clear governance structures, streamlined data management processes, and conducted compliance training programs to embed best practices.

Impact: Enhanced regulatory compliance, reduced risk exposure, and improved analytics-driven decision-making.

Multinational Manufacturer

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Challenge: The client experienced gaps in data capture, storage, and integration, weak governance structures, and inconsistent master data quality, posing regulatory and operational risks.

Our Solution: We redefined data roles and responsibilities, conducted data cleansing initiatives, strengthened access controls, identified lifecycle gaps, and introduced continuous monitoring tools to enhance governance.

Impact: Improved data quality, secure handling of sensitive data, strengthened regulatory compliance, streamlined lifecycle management, and established a scalable **Enterprise Data Management (EDM)** framework to support business growth.

(II) Leveraging Tools & Technologies for Data Governance

Leading organizations in Saudi Arabia are actively implementing data governance technologies to enhance compliance and operational efficiency. For instance,

- **Data Cataloging & Metadata Management:** Collibra, Alation, and Azure Purview for organizing and governing enterprise data.
- **Data Quality & Cleansing:** Talend, Informatica Data Quality, and SAP Information Steward for automated validation and enrichment.
- **Master Data Management (MDM):** SAP MDG, Informatica MDM, and Oracle MDM to ensure data consistency across business units.
- **AI & Automation for Compliance & Audits:** Splunk, ServiceNow GRC and MetricStream for real-time risk detection, automated regulatory monitoring, and audit readiness.

By leveraging the right tools and governance frameworks, organizations can accelerate their journey toward full NDMO compliance, ensuring both regulatory alignment and operational excellence.

CONCLUSION: STRENGTHENING DATA PROTECTION WITH NDMO COMPLIANCE

As Saudi Arabia advances its data governance landscape, organizations must view NDMO compliance as more than a regulatory obligation—it is a strategic necessity. By proactively addressing compliance challenges, implementing robust security measures, and leveraging expert guidance, businesses can safeguard sensitive data, build stakeholder trust, and ensure long-term resilience.

Compliance is not a one-time effort but an ongoing commitment to data protection and regulatory excellence. Organizations that embed NDMO standards into their operations will not only meet evolving requirements but also position themselves as leaders in a secure and trusted digital economy.

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