



Strengthening Skills for Data-Informed Governance

Discussion Guide for Module 2: Defining Goals for Data Identification

Purpose & Overview

This discussion guide is designed to help you apply the concepts from Module 2 to your own governance practice. As you learned in the module, strategic questions bridge the gap between board objectives and actionable insights, ensuring that data collection supports the required analysis for effective decision-making.

Key Points to Remember

Strategic data questions are:

- Objective-driven – Start with board objectives & ask what you need to know
- Governance-focused – Address strategic issues, not day-to-day operations
- Answerable – Can be addressed with available data & existing capacity
- Actionable – Lead to insights that inform policy & resource decisions

Before You Begin

Gather the following items:

- Your board's current strategic objectives
- Examples of data reports the board has received

Discussion Questions

1. Looking at your board's strategic objectives, what key questions do you need data to help answer?

Consider:

- What does the board need to know to monitor progress made toward the strategic objectives?
- Which leading indicators can help you assess progress?

2. How do you currently identify what data to request from your CEO?

Consider:

- Who initiates data requests at your board meetings?
- What criteria are used to determine which data the board receives?

3. How can you ensure your data questions focus on governance rather than operational concerns?

Consider:

- When have you or your fellow trustees inadvertently asked about operational data?
- What helps you distinguish strategic questions from administrative concerns?