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for UK Government

UK Government's
Programme and Project
Data Standard is coming.
Are you ready?





The Programme and Project Data Standard:

What Central Government delivery teams need to know

A simple guide to understanding The Programme and Project Data Standard, what it changes, and how to prepare your department.

Government's programme and project data requirements are moving towards a common standard. It creates a common language for programme and project data across government for the first time. For PMOs, SROs and delivery leaders, the question is no longer whether to prepare, it's how confidently you can get there.

Timeline

📍 **Dec 2025**
Version 1 published for trial.

📍 **2026**
Departments and arm's length bodies prepare adoption plans.

📍 **Early 2027**
Version 2 expected and mandatory for in-scope organisations.

📍 **2030**
In-scope organisations expected to meet the standard.



This timeline is directly supported by Government Project Delivery's published rollout information.

What is the Programme and Project Data Standard?

A simple explanation: The Programme and Project Data Standard sets out a consistent way for government programmes and projects to create, define, format and maintain delivery data.

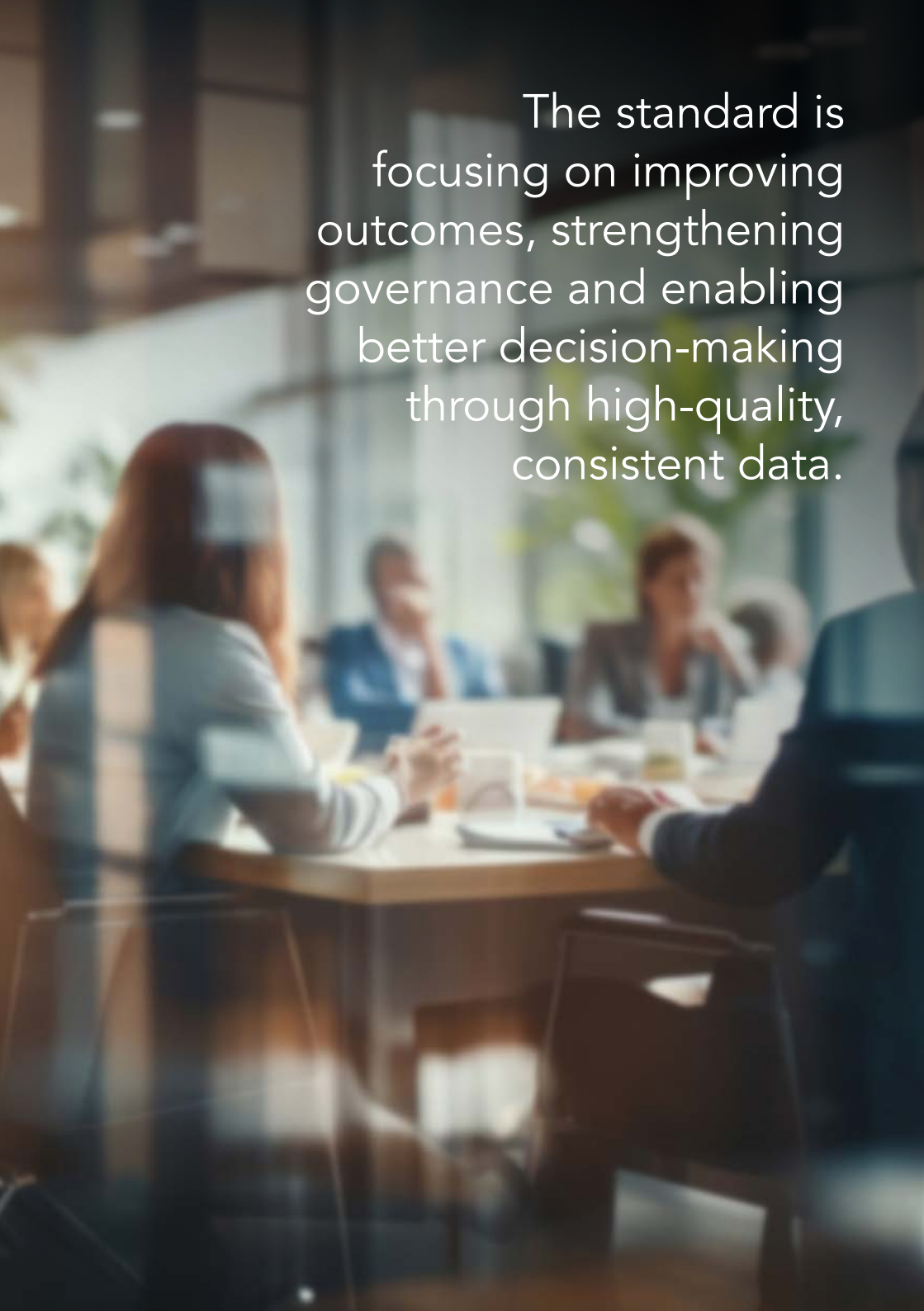
Before this standard existed, every department, every project management tool, and every team approached this differently. A milestone in one team's tracker might be completely different in structure and definition to a milestone in the next. Risk scores weren't comparable. Cost categories varied. Benefits were measured in ways that made aggregation across government almost meaningless.

The standard fixes this by establishing a common language for the data that sits at the heart of government project delivery.

Version 1 of this standard covers seven core data entities: project features, risk, issue, milestone, benefit, cost, and people, which all help departments manage information in a more consistent and comparable way by introducing consistent definitions, formats and update timelines.

Why has it been introduced?

- ✓ **Better quality data:**
So that delivery teams, boards and senior leaders can trust what they are seeing.
- ✓ **Stronger governance:**
So that accountability, controls and assurance are clearer across portfolios.
- ✓ **More consistent reporting:**
So that programmes and projects can be compared and understood across government.
- ✓ **Better decision-making:**
So that leaders can act earlier, with more confidence and less manual effort.



The standard is focusing on improving outcomes, strengthening governance and enabling better decision-making through high-quality, consistent data.

The shift for Delivery Teams

The Programme and Project Data Standard is not just a reporting requirement. It changes the way programme and project data needs to be captured, structured, governed and maintained.

What teams need to start asking now:

Using a practical checklist can help frame the adoption task by first, assessing the current data environment, identifying gaps against the data standard's mandatory fields, and then making a tooling decision and building a change management plan.

- Do we know which programme and project data we currently capture?
- Is that data held consistently across projects, programmes and portfolios?
- Are milestones, risks, costs and benefits recorded in a standard way?
- Can we evidence governance, approvals and assurance decisions?
- How much reporting still depends on spreadsheets, manual packs or re-keying?
- Do we have a clear plan for moving towards adoption during 2026?

The real challenge is not understanding the standard. It is making compliance work inside live portfolios without creating more admin, more disruption or another layer of manual reporting.

Is the data standard my problem?

Who's accountable if we're not compliant?
And what does that even mean day to day?



Accounting Officers

At the top, accounting officers are accountable for how information and data are managed across their organisation. They hold ultimate responsibility for data governance.



Chief Data Officers

Chief Data Officers are responsible for ensuring there are clear expectations for managing data, and for ensuring compliance with data and security requirements including those set by this standard.



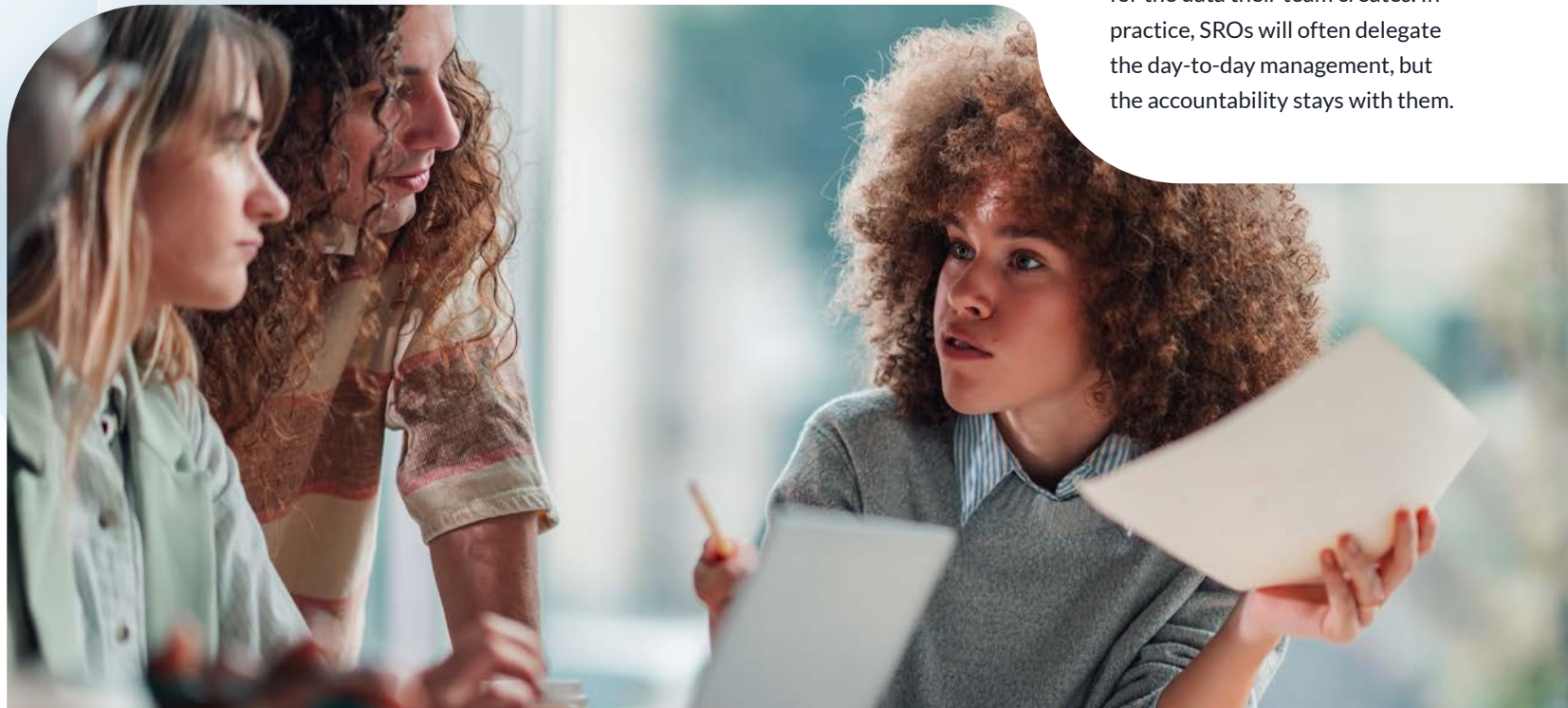
Senior Officer Accountable for Project Delivery

The senior officer accountable for project delivery in an organisation is responsible for ensuring the organisation's programme and project data complies with the standard's requirements.



Portfolio Directors and Senior Responsible Owners

At the delivery level, portfolio directors are responsible for each portfolio's data. For individual programmes and projects, that responsibility sits with the Senior Responsible Owner, the SRO. The SRO is named as the data owner for their programme or project. That gives them ultimate accountability for the data their team creates. In practice, SROs will often delegate the day-to-day management, but the accountability stays with them.



Meet the Programme and Project Data Standard requirements **without rebuilding everything from scratch**

1. Built around consistent project and programme data

The Programme and Project Data Standard is designed to create greater consistency in how project information is captured, managed and reported across government. Consistent data leads to better governance, clearer reporting and more confident decision-making.

A specific Verto build has been created around the data standard principles from the outset, helping organisations create a single source of truth for project, programme and portfolio information while achieving compliance immediately. With consistent data structures, transparent reporting and clear audit trails, teams can improve oversight, strengthen assurance and spend less time producing reports and more time delivering successful outcomes.

2. Less manual effort, fewer workarounds

Many delivery teams spend valuable time gathering information from multiple spreadsheets, systems and reports before they can provide a complete picture of programme performance. As organisations grow, these workarounds often become embedded, creating duplication, increasing reporting effort and making it harder to maintain consistent, reliable data.

The Programme and Project Data Standard encourages a more joined-up approach, with project information captured and managed in a consistent way across portfolios. By reducing reliance on manual consolidation and duplicate data sources, organisations can improve efficiency, strengthen confidence in reporting and free up teams to focus on delivering successful outcomes rather than administering processes.

3. Stronger Governance, clearer accountability

Many project and programme challenges can be traced back to unclear responsibilities, inconsistent governance processes or limited visibility of key decisions. As organisations manage increasingly complex portfolios, governance needs to be both robust and practical, providing assurance without creating unnecessary administration.

The Programme and Project Data Standard promotes a more consistent approach to governance, helping departments establish clearer accountability, stronger oversight and greater confidence in delivery information. With agreed structures, roles and reporting expectations, organisations are better equipped to manage risk, support assurance activities and demonstrate transparency throughout the lifecycle of a programme or project.



4. Ready for AI-enabled delivery

Much of the conversation around AI focuses on the technology itself, but successful adoption starts with something far more fundamental: trusted data. Before AI can help organisations identify trends, surface risks or support decision-making, it needs access to information that is consistent, reliable and well governed.

The Programme and Project Data Standard helps create that foundation. By establishing a more consistent approach to programme and project information, organisations can improve confidence in their data today while creating the conditions for more effective use of AI tomorrow.

In this sense, the data standard is not simply about compliance. It is about building the data maturity needed to support the future of programme and portfolio delivery, where insight is faster, decisions are better informed and teams can focus more of their time on delivering successful outcomes.

What this means if you're running a project today

Most teams won't need to tear everything up and start again, but will need to do some work:

1. Unique identifiers

The standard requires unique alphanumeric IDs for every entity - projects, risks, issues, milestones, benefits. Many teams don't have consistent ID conventions.

2. Category lists

Many attributes require data to be recorded from a fixed list of permitted values. Risk categories, milestone types, benefit classifications. If your current data uses free text where the standard requires categories, that's a gap.

3. Update frequencies

The standard specifies how often each attribute must be reviewed and updated. Monthly for current risk scores, quarterly for project end dates, on change for many others. If your data isn't being maintained to those frequencies, it won't meet the standard.

4. Metadata

The standard expects metadata - date created, last modified, created by, modified by - to be captured against all project delivery data. Much of this is generated automatically by good project management software, but not all tools do this well.

What an implementation plan actually needs to cover

For organisations where immediate compliance isn't possible, the standard requires an implementation plan. This is a real document, not a placeholder. It needs to describe the changes and activities needed to enable programmes and projects to create and manage data in line with the standard.

A credible implementation plan will typically address three things. First, the current state of the organisation's programme and project data environment, covering the IT systems in use, the data management practices in place, and an honest assessment of data maturity. Second, the specific gaps between current practice and the standard's requirements for each data entity and attribute. Third, a timeline and set of activities to close those gaps, with owners assigned.

The standard is explicit that limitations of existing IT systems may make immediate compliance impossible. That is accepted. What is not accepted is doing nothing. The expectation is a documented, credible path forward.

What to do right now

Senior Responsible Officer: Start by understanding which data entities are relevant to your programme or project, and identify who in your team is acting as data steward for each one, even informally.

CDO/senior officer accountable for project delivery: The trial period is the time to assess your organisation's current data environment against the standard and develop your implementation plan. Don't wait for Version 2.

Verto works with government project teams to assess, improve and manage programme and project data. If you want to understand where your organisation sits against the standard, talk to us. We've done the reading so you don't have to start from scratch.



Book a Programme and Project Data Standard readiness conversation

Ask for your personalised Countdown to Compliance
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