

# GETTING TO KNOW YOUR DATA

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*How to successfully  
plan and implement a  
data inventory project  
in your organization*



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# KEY TERMS

Before we begin, here are a few definitions of key terms that you will find throughout this guide:

TERM	DEFINITION
Data classification	Data classification is the process of sorting data into different categories to facilitate management, security, and storage.
Data inventory	A data inventory is a list of datasets held by an organization. It contains metadata about each dataset.
Database application	A specialized type of software that is capable of storing, querying, analyzing, visualizing and reporting data in a structured format.
Dataset	A dataset is a collection of digital data that relates to a common topic or was curated for a common purpose.
Digital data	Digital data refers to raw facts that include numbers, letters and symbols, images and sounds that have been stored in digital form.
Document	A document is a container for unstructured data, usually text.
Metadata	Metadata is a type of data that describes characteristics or aspects of other data. Individual units of metadata are known as attributes.
Record	A record is a type of document containing information that serves as evidence of a specific business transaction.

# INTRODUCTION

Many organizations of all shapes and sizes struggle to keep track of what data they possess, where it is, and who has access to it. A [data inventory](#) project can help solve these challenges, and more, no matter what your organization's goals are when it comes to managing data and information.

This guide provides an introduction for organizations that:

- are seeking to create a data inventory for the first time, or;
- have previously attempted to create a data inventory and are looking to make a new attempt using best practices.

## Why are data inventory projects important?

Virtually every organization creates, uses and manages data in some capacity. In fact, many organizations hold so much data that it is nearly impossible for any one person to have a complete picture of all the data that exists, where it is, and who has access to it.

When it comes to running an organization, the individuals who work with any given dataset(s) on a daily basis usually have the best understanding of that data. Over time, data users may even develop their own ad hoc data management practices that meet their particular needs and allow them to get on with their work. These practices often go undocumented, residing only in the brains of a handful of knowledgeable individuals. Some organizations find that they can operate well enough under these conditions.

However, changes or disruptions are a fact of life for all organizations. Organizations without a data inventory can quickly run into problems such as the following:

- **Staff turnover without adequate knowledge transfer:** Someone leaves the organization without having documented their data management practices, which means that remaining staff need to spend time figuring out where data is stored and how it was managed, and can cause significant disruptions to regular operations.

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A data inventory, in its simplest form, is a list of the organization's important datasets with details about each one, including its contents, storage location, and access permissions.

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Is your organization missing opportunities or facing risks because it doesn't know what data it has, where it is stored, or who can access it?

- **Difficulties meeting new legislative requirements:** The organization needs to update its data management practices in order to comply with new privacy or data protection laws, but realizes it lacks clarity on what data it holds, where it is stored, and how the changes will impact it.
- **Inability to respond to new opportunities:** The organization is unable to react to changing business conditions or take advantage of opportunities to use its data to improve services or programs (or develop new ones). It also struggles to share its data with potential partners for broader impact because important datasets cannot be readily discovered.

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Knowing what data you have, where it is stored, and who has access to it is the first step towards managing it more effectively and responsibly, unlocking its full value to your organization.



## What is a data inventory?

A **data inventory** is a list of the most important [datasets](#) and [data sources](#) managed by an organization. This list contains [metadata](#) that provides information and context that can support the organization in making better decisions about how each dataset and data source is managed.

## What is a dataset?

**A dataset is a collection of digital data that relates to a common topic or was curated for a common purpose.** Datasets can contain 'raw data', analyzed results or derived information in either a structured or unstructured format:

- **Structured** data refers to data stored as rows and columns (e.g., a spreadsheet) or in a database.
- **Unstructured** data refers to any data not stored in a database format, such as images, video and audio files, text files, PDF documents and more.

For the purposes of this guide, we focus primarily on **structured datasets** (i.e., data contained in spreadsheets and database tables). This type of data is typically more standardized and discoverable, which makes it an ideal starting point for a data inventory.

### What about paper documents and records?

While some organizations are transitioning to digital document management with the help of specialized software, many organizations still hold a large amount of their data and information in the form of paper-based documents and records.

An organization's information management strategy needs to take into account that data stored in physical format requires a distinct set of practices from those required by digital data.

This guide focuses on creating an inventory of datasets that already exist in a structured, digitized format. However, once data and information has been digitized and converted into a structured dataset (e.g., a spreadsheet or database), it can be added to the data inventory.

## What is a data source?

A data inventory can also be used to keep track of **data sources** — that is, any technology or system that stores data. Many organizations rely on a combination of data sources for their day-to-day work, including database applications, hard drives and cloud-based storage, and web-based tools and applications. It is important to keep a record of which technologies and systems your organization uses to store data because it influences how and by whom data can be accessed, how data quality can be managed, how data from different systems can be integrated, and many other data management decisions.

### Dealing with databases

Database applications are a very common data source for many organizations. When you open a file folder on your desktop, you can see exactly how many individual files — and datasets — it contains, which makes it relatively easy to document in a data inventory.

Many organizations use database applications that allow data to be loaded and then manipulated through various tools and modules designed for specific tasks. Users often have a range of options for viewing or generating customized reports from the data.

Database applications organize datasets into a structure that is easier for the computer to work with, but is less intuitive for humans. As a result, you may not be able to view the contents of a database as individual datasets in the familiar “tree” folder structure.

It can be difficult to know how best to document the contents of a database in the data inventory. In [Step 6](#), we provide an example of one potential approach to this challenge.

## What is metadata?

A data inventory contains metadata — which means “data about data.” Metadata is a type of data that describes and provides context for other data. Metadata consists of discrete units known as metadata attributes, each of which captures information about a specific characteristic or attribute of a dataset.

See [Step 4](#) for a list of suggested metadata attributes to capture in your data inventory.

## How to use this guide

This guide is designed to walk you through the key steps involved in [planning](#) and [implementing](#) a data inventory project. A fictional case study is included to illustrate these steps in action.

Two additional tools are provided to support your planning:

- **A template data inventory project plan** to be used for documenting the decisions you will make during the planning stage for easy reference later on.
- **A template data inventory worksheet** to be used for recording and organizing information about your datasets and data sources that will form the basis for your first data inventory.

Let's get started!



# PLANNING A DATA INVENTORY PROJECT

Without proper planning, a data inventory project can quickly get complicated and overwhelming, even for a small organization. To keep the project on track, it is recommended to follow these steps before you get started:

1. Set a clear, realistic objective based on current priorities
2. Define which data sources and datasets are in and out of scope
3. Establish the roles and responsibilities of different individuals within the project
4. Decide what metadata attributes are most important to capture

## Step 1: Set a clear objective

Good data management depends upon having as complete a picture as possible of all the data your organization produces and consumes. However, the sheer volume of data that organizations handle means that it is not practical to document every last piece of data in a data inventory.

A data inventory project is a foundational component of many data management initiatives and can pave the way for numerous possibilities. Therefore, it is critical

to start by defining a clear objective based on the current priorities of your organization, such as:

- Ensuring appropriate levels of access to and protection of personal or sensitive data to meet legislative requirements and ethical standards
- Establishing more formal roles and responsibilities around data to support better decision-making
- Increasing discoverability of critical datasets to improve operational efficiency
- Identifying and addressing data quality issues proactively

A clear objective will help you to keep the scope manageable by prioritizing which data should be included in the data inventory and what metadata should be documented.



## Instructions

1. Facilitate a discussion with key stakeholders and team members to identify a clear objective(s) for the data inventory project.
2. Once you have aligned on an objective(s), document it in your [data inventory project plan](#) so that you can refer back to it throughout the project.





## Step 2: Define the scope

The specific objective your organization decides to pursue will influence what kinds of data are in and out of scope for the data inventory project and what metadata you will document for each dataset.

It is useful to establish guidelines on what kinds of datasets you and your team members will prioritize for documentation in the data inventory. This will keep you from attempting to list every item stored in your organization's drive or every view in a database.

As you begin adding datasets to the data inventory, you will almost inevitably encounter items that require you to make a judgment call about whether or not they fit within the guidelines you have set. Make sure you document these occurrences and revise your guidelines accordingly to ensure that others know what to do if they encounter the same issue.

 CONSIDER INCLUDING THESE ITEMS	CONSIDER EXCLUDING THESE ITEMS 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Datasets containing personal and/or sensitive information (e.g., personal names, addresses, phone numbers, health information, financial data)</li><li>▪ Datasets that are considered the 'go-to' authoritative source of information on a topic</li><li>▪ Datasets that are continually updated (e.g., lists of clients, assets, accounts)</li><li>▪ Datasets used to track issues or make some kind of decision</li><li>▪ Datasets used in the creation of reports to management, funding organizations, regulatory agencies, etc.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Individual documents or records (e.g., Word files, PDFs), unless they form part of a collection (e.g., a series of records)</li><li>▪ One-off project documents, reports, or data exports that only contain a 'snapshot' of a larger dataset(s) at a specific moment in time</li><li>▪ Personal to-do lists, work plans</li><li>▪ Paper-based files or records — the focus is digital data</li></ul>

If in doubt as to a dataset's relevance to the objective of the data inventory project, err on the side of caution and include it. Once you have a fuller picture of what data you hold, you will be in a better position to review the inventory and determine whether it should still be included (or if it is worth holding onto).



### Instructions

1. Based on the objective(s) you have defined, draft an initial set of guidelines on data sources and datasets to be included or excluded from the data inventory project scope.
2. Document these decisions in your data inventory project plan so that you can refer to them throughout the project.

## Step 3: Establish roles and responsibilities

A successful data inventory project depends upon everybody knowing what their roles and responsibilities are. If your organization is still in the early stages of improving its data governance and management practices, a data inventory project is a great place to start defining what these roles and responsibilities mean in practice.

The organization should nominate an individual to act as the data inventory project coordinator. This should be someone who has at least a high-level understanding of the various business processes across the organization (or department) and the types of data and information used in these processes.

Staff members who work with data every day as part of their job have valuable knowledge and experience to contribute to the data inventory project. Throughout the project, the coordinator will need to identify and follow up with these individual staff members in order to capture their in-depth knowledge in the data inventory spreadsheet. Therefore, it is important to plan ahead for how and when staff will be involved and ensure that these expectations are clearly communicated.



### Instructions

1. Identify a staff member to act as the data inventory project coordinator.
2. Decide how and when other staff members will be involved in the project.
3. Document these decisions in your data inventory project plan so that you can refer to them throughout the project.

## Step 4: Decide on metadata attributes you will collect

Now you need to decide which specific metadata attributes you are going to collect for each of your organization's **data sources** and **datasets**.

There are many different metadata attributes that can be documented in the data inventory, but organizations will typically find the most value in business metadata that provides information and context related to how data is used and managed in the day-to-day organizational processes, rather than overly technical details.<sup>1</sup> At a minimum, this typically includes the name of the dataset, a description of its contents, where it is stored (data source), and the name and contact details of the person responsible for maintaining the dataset.

(1) Other types of metadata exist, such as technical metadata, which provides information and context related to the technical details of data, systems, and processes, and operational metadata, which provides information and context related to the processing of and access to datasets. However, these types of metadata are usually only generated and used in the backend of the system, and are typically only of interest to system administrators and other IT staff.

Depending upon the objectives you have defined in [Step 1](#), you may want to capture additional metadata attributes for each dataset. This could include information about access conditions as well as data classifications based on the level of sensitivity (for example, whether it contains personal or confidential information) or importance to the organization.

If this is your organization's first attempt at conducting a data inventory project, it is best to start by capturing the smallest number of metadata attributes that will achieve the objective you set earlier.

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Remember to start with the basics: You can always return to the data inventory worksheet and add more metadata attributes to each dataset as needed.



## Instructions

1. Decide on the metadata attributes you will record for each data source and dataset.
2. Update your data inventory project plan by adding, editing, or removing rows as needed in the metadata attribute tables to reflect the names, descriptions, and acceptable values for your selected metadata attributes.
3. Update your data inventory worksheet by adding, editing, or removing columns as needed so that they match the metadata attributes listed in your project plan.

### Fictional case study (Part 1)

A local food aid organization is starting its first-ever data inventory project. The organization's leadership decided to embark on this project to better understand what data it holds and how it will be affected by new privacy and data protection legislation, as well as to identify opportunities to improve how they operate their programs.

The leadership have asked Nina, a senior staff member with deep knowledge of the organization, to lead the data inventory project. Since the organization is starting from scratch, Nina decides that the focus will be on collecting only basic metadata attributes for important datasets related to daily program operations and finance.

Nina makes a list of staff members who are knowledgeable about these datasets and sends them email to these staff members to ensure they know why the data inventory project is necessary, what information needs to be collected, and how their active participation will contribute to the project's success.

# CREATING AND MAINTAINING A DATA INVENTORY

At this point, your organization is ready to start creating its first data inventory! The following steps are intended to be carried out by the data inventory project coordinator during the planning stage.

## Step 5: Identify data sources

It is recommended to first conduct an inventory of the data sources before you begin creating an inventory of the datasets themselves. This is to ensure that you have identified all potential locations where datasets may be stored and do not accidentally overlook key data sources.

As previously mentioned, data sources are any technology or system where data is stored, such as:

- Applications, information systems and databases used on a regular basis to collect, manage and access data and information relating to key business processes.
- Personal or shared drives (physical hard drives or cloud-based storage such as Google Drive or SharePoint).
- Web-based platforms or applications (e.g., online survey tools).

### Recommended metadata attributes for data sources

The table below contains a list of recommended basic metadata attributes to capture for each [data source](#). You can modify this list or add extra attributes depending on your needs.

FIELD NAME	DESCRIPTION / INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE
Name	The name of the system or data source
Description	A brief explanation of what the system is used for and what kind of data it contains
Contact name	The name of the contact person responsible for the software or database (often an IT professional)
Contact email	The email address of the contact person responsible for the software or database



### Instructions

1. In the data inventory worksheet, begin by listing as many data sources as you can in the “Data Sources” tab. If there is any uncertainty about whether an item qualifies as a data source, include it in the list and provide an explanation in the notes field. The list of data sources can be revised at a later stage if needed.
2. Document basic metadata for each data source. See the table above for suggestions on how to document this information.
3. Share the template with other staff members to fill in additional details until each data source is listed and accompanied by basic metadata.

By the end of this step, you should have an initial list of data sources, along with basic metadata for each one.

## Step 6: Brainstorm an initial list of datasets

Once you have identified most or all of your data sources, it is time to begin an initial brainstorming of datasets located in each data source. Collecting this information will require tapping into the knowledge of staff who work with data on a daily basis and have a deep understanding of how each dataset is used.

As we noted earlier, we recommend starting with structured datasets — spreadsheets and database tables. You can use this list of questions to help you identify datasets:

- What data is entered or captured from business processes?
- What data gets included in monthly/quarterly/annual reports?
- What data is reported to external organizations, funders, government agencies, etc.?
- What data do other business units or departments ask for?
- What data is currently publicly available on your website?

A dataset is a collection of digital data that relates to a common topic or was curated for a common purpose.

### Recommended metadata attributes for datasets

During the initial brainstorming step, you should aim to document basic descriptive information for each identified dataset. The table below contains a list of recommended basic metadata attributes to capture for each [dataset](#).

FIELD NAME	DESCRIPTION / INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE
Name	<p>A brief descriptive name for the dataset. It should describe the main entity being represented in each record (usually 1st column of each row).</p> <p>Note: The name should be understandable by non-technical users. Ensure that you spell out any acronyms.</p>
Description	<p>A brief description of the dataset’s contents and purpose, including the primary topic it covers (i.e. what each record/object represents), as well as any additional pieces of information contained within it. It should also describe who uses the dataset and for what specific process(es) it is used.</p>
Data source	<p>The name of the system or data source (from Step 1: Data Source Inventory).</p>



(CONTINUED)

Contact name	Name of contact who is responsible for the dataset.
Contact email	Email address of contact responsible for the dataset
	Any considerations or concerns related to this dataset.
Notes	Note: This field could be used to indicate that, for example, a dataset appears to be a duplicate of another dataset in the data inventory, so that you can return to it later on.

Additional metadata attributes

Once you have captured the basic metadata attributes from the table above, you may want to consider documenting additional metadata attributes depending on your project objective(s). The table below contains several suggestions.

FIELD NAME	DESCRIPTION / INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE
Access conditions	Indicates which individuals or groups of individuals have access to the dataset.
	Indicates the level of sensitivity of the dataset.
Sensitivity level	Note: You can opt for a simple classification ( <i>High, Medium, Low</i> ) or a more granular classification ( <i>Public, Internal, Confidential, Restricted</i> ) depending on your organization's needs.
Contains personal information	Indicates whether the dataset contains (or is likely to contain) information about an identifiable individual ( <i>Yes, No, Unsure</i> )
Level of criticality	Indicates a dataset's level of importance to key business processes and, by extension, its value to the organization, which can be useful for prioritizing data governance efforts ( <i>High, Medium, Low</i> )

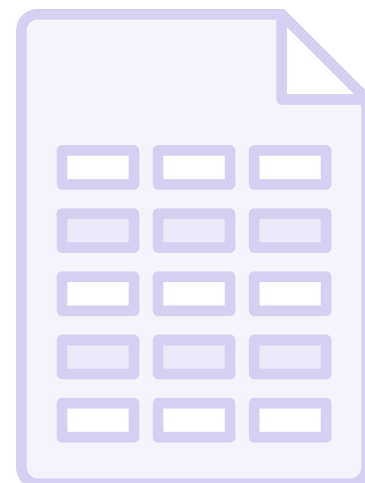
Once you have created a basic entry for each dataset in your data inventory worksheet, you will be able to return to it later on to fill in more detail later on. For now, focus on capturing as many datasets as possible. If you are in doubt as to a dataset's relevance to the objective of the data inventory project, err on the side of caution and include it in your data inventory worksheet; once you have a more complete picture of your data holdings, you will be in a better position to review the inventory and determine whether its inclusion is warranted.



## Instructions

1. In the data inventory worksheet, begin by listing as many datasets as you can in the "Datasets" tab. You can approach this in a couple of ways:
  - Brainstorm all datasets that are contained in each data source (see the list of guiding questions below)
  - List key business processes, break each one down into steps, and document the datasets involved in each step.
2. For each dataset, document information for each metadata attribute in the data inventory worksheet, based on the definitions you documented earlier in your data inventory project plan.
3. After the initial brainstorming, review the list and fill in the other fields for each dataset with more details, such as how it gets processed, where and how it is stored, who has access to it, and who the main point of contact is.
4. Share the data inventory worksheet with other staff members and ask them to add any missing datasets and fill in additional details until each dataset is accompanied by basic metadata.

By the end of this step, you should have an initial list of datasets from each data source you documented in the previous step, along with basic details about each one. Do not worry if it looks a little disorganized or contains small mistakes as these will be fixed in the next step.



Fictional case study (Part 2)

After laying the groundwork for a successful project during the planning phase, Nina is ready to begin collecting information from staff. Nina speaks to one of the program managers, Pierre, to brainstorm an initial list of key datasets that are involved in the day-to-day operations of their food aid programs. Most of this data is kept in various spreadsheets on the organization's cloud drive storage, in a drive open to all staff or in a drive accessible only to management.

Nina provides Pierre with access to the data inventory worksheet, who then goes through each drive and documents important datasets in the data inventory worksheet. One category of dataset contains the personal information collected from beneficiaries of the food aid program. Pierre makes sure to note this in the description field as it will be important to know later on. The organization has been running food aid programs for 10 years, which means some of the data goes back that far. Pierre includes the year in each dataset name to ensure that each one is uniquely identified.

NAME OF DATASET	DESCRIPTION	NAME OF DATA SOURCE	CONTACT PERSON
Client Information (2024)	<p>This dataset contains personal details about individuals and families receiving food aid, including their contact information, household size, income levels, and eligibility status</p> <p>Contains personal information.</p>	Google Drive (Staff)	Pierre
Client Information (2014-2023)	<p>This dataset contains personal details about individuals and families receiving food aid between 2014-2023, including their contact information, household size, income levels, and eligibility status</p> <p>Contains personal information.</p>	Google Drive (Staff)	Pierre
Food Inventory	<p>The food inventory dataset tracks the items available for distribution, including their quantities, expiration dates, and nutritional information</p>	Google Drive (Staff)	Nina
Donation Records (2024)	<p>This dataset documents all donations received by the organization in 2024, detailing the donor information, types of items donated, and quantities, as well as the value of donations</p>	Google Drive (Management)	Nina
Donation Records (2014-2023)	<p>This dataset documents all donations received by the organization between 2014-2023</p>	Google Drive (Management)	Nina

Next, Nina speaks to the organization's head of finance, Emilie, and learns that several important datasets are stored in an accounting application, *FinanceApp*, in modules such as *Accounts Payable*, *Accounts Receivable*, and *Vendor List*.

After investigating how data is organized in *FinanceApp*, Nina and Emilie determine that the simplest way to document its contents in the data inventory worksheet will be to treat each module as a separate dataset, even though some data attributes are shared between modules.

Nina provides Emilie with access to the data inventory worksheet, where she records basic information about each dataset, including its name, a brief description of its contents, the name of the data source, and the name and contact information of someone who knows the data well (Emilie, in this case).

NAME OF DATASET	DESCRIPTION	NAME OF DATA SOURCE	CONTACT PERSON
Accounts Payable	This module contains a list of accounts payable, including the following data attributes: Invoice Number, Vendor ID, Vendor Name, Invoice Date, Due Date, Invoice Amount, Payment Status, Payment Method, Purchase Order Number, Line Items	FinanceApp	Emilie
Accounts Receivable	This module contains a list of accounts receivable, including the following data attributes: Invoice Number, Customer ID, Customer Name, Invoice Date, Due Date, Invoice Amount, Payment Status, Payment Method, Line Items	FinanceApp	Emilie
Vendor List	This module contains a list of vendors, including the following data attributes: Vendor ID, Vendor Name, Contact Person, Contact Email, Contact Phone Number, Address, Tax ID Number, Payment Terms, Category, Status	FinanceApp	Emilie

The data inventory project is already off to an excellent start! Nina repeats these steps with her other colleagues, tapping into their knowledge to ensure that the data inventory captures accurate information about the organization's important datasets.

## Step 7: Revise and finalize the data inventory

After capturing basic information for each dataset, the data inventory coordinators should do a second pass to clean up this information and add further elements that may be useful for future data management work (for example, the dataset's importance to the organization, or whether it contains personal information).



### Instructions

1. Review each row in the "Datasets" tab for completeness and accuracy, taking notes of any inconsistencies, duplication, missing or incorrect information.
2. Make the necessary corrections or clarifications. This may require going back to the contact person listed as responsible for the dataset to gather additional information.
3. When you have finished making necessary corrections or clarifications, share the data inventory worksheet with other team members for final validation and feedback.
4. Once you are satisfied that the data inventory is as complete and accurate as possible, store the original worksheet file in a safe location for archival purposes (make sure the file is clearly labelled and dated).
5. Place a copy of the worksheet in a location accessible to all staff (e.g., a shared drive folder).

## Step 8: Create a plan to regularly review and update the data inventory

A data inventory is never complete. In fact, the value of a data inventory depends upon having a plan in place to keep it as up-to-date and accurate as possible.

Reflect on your experiences in planning and implementing the data inventory project, and use them to determine what kinds of processes should be in place to manage future updates and changes to the data inventory.





## Instructions

1. Decide on a process for adding new datasets to the data inventory (e.g., update the data inventory on an as-needed basis, add in batches at scheduled intervals, etc.)
2. Decide on a process for adding new metadata attributes or revising existing ones.
3. Document these decisions in your data inventory project plan.

### Fictional case study (Part 3)

Nina is satisfied that all major program and finance datasets have been accounted for. She reviews the information provided about each one, and follows up with the relevant staff member to make clarifications and revisions where necessary.

Nina shares the revised version of the data inventory with the organization's leadership and gives them an opportunity to provide feedback. After a few small revisions, Nina places the finalized version of the data inventory in a central folder in the organization's cloud drive that all staff members can access.

The outcome is a resource that the organization can now begin to use to make better decisions about how it manages its data. Recognizing that a data inventory is an ongoing effort, the organization's leadership decides that it should be formally reviewed once per year to ensure it is up-to-date and to identify further opportunities for improvement and growth.

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Congratulations!  
You have  
successfully  
planned and  
implemented your  
organization's  
first data  
inventory  
project.

# GET STARTED TODAY!

By completing your initial data inventory, you have established a solid foundation for future projects, such as improving the [quality of your data](#), [mapping data flows](#), and many other initiatives to improve how your organization manages and governs its data.

## Template

Click on the link below to explore, use and adapt Open North's data-inventory project plan and worksheet templates.

Templates



## Free online courses

We recommend enrolling in Open North's online introductory course on the ["Fundamentals of Data Partnerships"](#) to learn more about the benefits, risks, and case studies related to data sharing. [Sign up here](#) for our online training platform (it's free!).

## Targeted support services

Open North can provide your organization with the support it needs to plan and implement a successful data inventory project and meet its data management goals. Contact us at [info@opennorth.ca](mailto:info@opennorth.ca) to learn more about our services.

## About Open North

Open North is a Canadian nonprofit dedicated to advancing the common good. As an organization with expertise in data governance and digital strategy, we work alongside governments, nonprofits, and mission-aligned businesses to create transformative digital strategies and data governance frameworks.

Open North's team is made up of professionals with a wide range of expertise, including in government, strategic and operational planning, urban planning, community building, information technology, applied research, international development, and policy development. With our diverse backgrounds and skills, Open North's team members bring valuable perspectives and experience to all projects.

Open North is part of Montréal in Common, a project led by the City of Montréal as part of the Smart Cities Challenge, carried out with the financial support of the Government of Canada.

[opennorth.ca](https://opennorth.ca)

## About the Smart Cities Challenge and Montréal in Common

Montréal in Common is an innovation community led by the City of Montréal, whose partners are experimenting with solutions regarding access to food, mobility and municipal bylaws, with a view to rethink the city. Montréal in Common projects are made possible thanks to the prize awarded to the City of Montréal by the Government of Canada as part of the Smart Cities Challenge.

**Author:** Steve Coutts

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Getting to Know Your Data