SmartSuite

Framework / IT Governance / Other

COBIT 2019

COBIT 2019 is ISACA's framework for governing and managing enterprise IT, with 40 objectives in five domains, six governance principles and 11 design factors.



What it is

COBIT 2019 is the governance and management framework for enterprise information and technology (I&T) published by ISACA, released in 2018 as an evolution of COBIT 5. Enterprises, IT leaders and auditors use it as a voluntary reference for who directs I&T, who manages it and how it supports business goals. ISACA has announced COBIT 7, which replaces the COBIT 2019 Foundation Certificate on 27 October 2026.

ISACA, which first released COBIT in 1996, owns and publishes the framework. COBIT 2019 contains 40 governance and management objectives in five domains: Evaluate, Direct and Monitor (EDM); Align, Plan and Organize (APO); Build, Acquire and Implement (BAI); Deliver, Service and Support (DSS); and Monitor, Evaluate and Assess (MEA). EDM holds the governance objectives and the other four domains hold the management objectives.

At a glance

PUBLISHER ISACA	TYPE Framework	VERSION COBIT 2019 (ISACA, released 2018)
EFFECTIVE Not applicable (voluntary framework)	DOMAIN IT Governance	FAMILY Other
REGION United States	ADOPTION MODEL Voluntary	IMPLEMENTATION COMPLEXITY High

Source: isaca.org/resources/cobit

Why it matters

- **Governance kept distinct from management** The five EDM objectives are the governance objectives and the 35 objectives in APO, BAI, DSS and MEA are management objectives, so a board and an IT executive can each see what they own.
- **Tailoring to the enterprise** Eleven design factors, from enterprise strategy and risk profile to compliance requirements and enterprise size, help an enterprise customize and prioritize its governance components.
- **A measurable capability scale** Performance management uses the CMMI Performance Management Scheme with capability and maturity levels from 0 to 5, so progress on a process can be reported as a level.
- **Alignment with other standards** The third governance framework principle calls for alignment with major standards, frameworks and regulations, and ISACA publishes guidance on implementing the NIST Cybersecurity Framework using COBIT 2019.

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How SmartSuite supports COBIT 2019

Objective Library by Domain

Hold the 40 objectives as records grouped under EDM, APO, BAI, DSS and MEA, each with an owner and a link to the enterprise and alignment goals it serves.

Design Factor Register

Record the 11 design factors and the current value of each, with the date a change prompted a review of the governance system.

Capability Assessments

Store the assessed capability level from 0 to 5 for each objective, with the target level, evidence files and remediation actions.

Component Coverage

Link each objective to the seven component types so gaps show up by processes, structures, information, people, policies, culture and services.

Risk, Vendor and Audit Alignment

Connect objectives to risks in Enterprise Risk Management and Cyber & IT Risk, to vendors in Third Party Risk Management for APO10, and to engagements in Internal Audit Management.

Governance Reporting

Build Enterprise Reporting dashboards that show objective status, capability levels and open actions by domain for the board and IT leadership.

Common framework mappings

COSO ERM 2017 | ISO/IEC 20000-1 | ISO 27001:2022 | ISO 27002:2022 | ITIL 4 | NIST CSF 2.0

Official resources

ISACA COBIT resource hub

ISACA's COBIT page: publications, toolkit, certificates, white papers and videos for COBIT 2019.

isaca.org/resources/cobit

Implementing a governance system using COBIT 2019 (ISACA, 2021)

ISACA article describing seven steps to customize COBIT 2019, from stakeholder needs to performance monitoring.

isaca.org/resources/news-and-trends/industry-news/2021/a-systematic-approach-to-implementing-a-governance-system-using-cobit-2019

COBIT design factors (ISACA, 2019)

ISACA article on the 11 design factors in the COBIT 2019 Design Guide.

isaca.org/resources/news-and-trends/industry-news/2019/cobit-design-factors

COBIT 2019 and COBIT 5 comparison (ISACA, 2020)

ISACA comparison of COBIT 2019 and COBIT 5: principles, objectives, design factors and performance management.

isaca.org/resources/news-and-trends/industry-news/2020/cobit-2019-and-cobit-5-comparison

Frequently asked questions

How many objectives does COBIT 2019 have and how are they grouped?

COBIT 2019 has 40 governance and management objectives in five domains. EDM (Evaluate, Direct and Monitor) holds the five governance objectives, EDM01 to EDM05. APO has 14, BAI has 11, DSS has 6 and MEA has 4 management objectives (ISACA, Leveraging COBIT for Effective AI System Governance, 2025).

What are the six governance system principles in COBIT 2019?

ISACA names them as provide stakeholder value, a holistic approach, a dynamic governance system, governance distinct from management, tailored to enterprise needs, and an end-to-end governance system. COBIT 5 had five principles. A separate set of three principles covers the governance framework itself: a conceptual model, openness and flexibility, and alignment with major standards, frameworks and regulations.

What are COBIT design factors?

The COBIT 2019 Design Guide lists 11 design factors that shape a tailored governance system: enterprise strategy, enterprise goals, risk profile, I&T-related issues, threat landscape, compliance requirements, role of IT, sourcing model for IT, IT implementation methods, technology adoption strategy and enterprise size. ISACA groups them as contextual, strategic and tactical.

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Is COBIT 2019 free, and can an organization be certified?

ISACA lists the COBIT 2019 publications in its store, and its COBIT page also offers a toolkit download and white papers. The certificates ISACA lists are for individuals: the COBIT Foundation Certificate and the COBIT Design and Implementation Certificate Program. COBIT 2019 is a voluntary framework, not a certification for an organization.

Does COBIT 7 replace COBIT 2019?

ISACA's certificate page says the COBIT 2019 Foundations Certificate will be replaced by the COBIT 7 Foundations Certificate on 27 October 2026 and that the COBIT 2019 certificate will be sunset on 26 April 2027. ISACA has said an update to COBIT is planned for 2026. This page describes COBIT 2019 until ISACA publishes COBIT 7.

License included / downloadable: No ISACA lists the COBIT 2019 publications in its store, so the full text is obtained from ISACA under the terms it sets, which can include purchase or membership; this platform does not reproduce it. ISACA's COBIT page also offers a COBIT Toolkit download and white papers.

Full framework page and mappings: smartsuite.com/frameworks/cobit-2019-control-objectives-for-information-and-related-technologies

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