

Capability Guide: Technology Architecture

Technology Choices Need to Fit Together.

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How to use this guide

Read Sections 1 through 3 for the executive view. Use Sections 4 through 7 to build and mature the capability. Use Section 8 to decide what to do next Monday morning.

01 Executive Brief

Technology Architecture is the organization's ability to design, maintain, and adapt a coherent technology foundation that connects systems, data, AI, automation, workflows, security, vendors, and governance.

Architecture is the first Technology capability because it shapes the environment the organization is building toward. Platforms enable. Integration connects. Automation improves. Resilience protects. Architecture makes those choices fit together.

Capability ID	T1 - Architecture
Domain	Technology
Plain-English test	Can leaders, technology teams, and business owners explain the current technology environment, the target direction, the major gaps, the key standards, and how technology choices support enterprise strategy?
Five behaviors	See. Shape. Sequence. Decide. Adapt.
Three outputs	Technology Landscape Map. Target Architecture and Principles. Technology Roadmap and Decision Log.
Accountable owner	Chief Information Officer, technology executive, or assigned technology leader, with executive sponsorship.
First move	Create a simple current-state technology landscape map and identify the top architecture decisions blocking strategy, data, AI, automation, or work redesign.

Core idea

Architecture is not a diagram. It is the organization's ability to make technology choices fit together so strategy, data, AI, automation, security, workflows, and people can work in one coherent environment.

2026.08 ALIGNMENT | Architecture in the refreshed TIO system

Primary outcome contribution: All three outcomes

- Connect business outcomes, work, data, applications, agents, models, technology, identity, authority, assurance, resilience, and transition states.
- Design for model and provider replaceability, stable contracts, authoritative-state boundaries, and credible exit.
- Use the End-State Architecture as the reference destination and adapt it to the client rather than prescribing one product stack.

Evidence at managed maturity: Architecture is defined, owned, applied consistently, measured in operation, reviewed through evidence, and improved without weakening trust, accountability, or Enterprise Autonomy.

First refresh move: Map one priority workflow across business, data, application, agent, technology, authority, assurance, and transition views.

02 The Problem This Capability Solves

Most organizations do not have one technology problem. They have many small choices that were made separately and now behave like one large problem.

A team buys a tool. A vendor adds a platform. A department builds a workflow. A report depends on a spreadsheet. An automation works only for one process. An AI pilot uses data no one owns. Each decision may have made sense locally. Together, they create complexity.

Architecture solves this by giving leaders and teams a shared view of what exists, what the organization is building toward, what standards matter, what dependencies must be managed, and what choices need to be made deliberately.

When Architecture is weak

- Technology decisions become local, reactive, vendor-led, or tool-led.
- Systems do not fit together and work moves through spreadsheets, email, and manual reconciliation.
- AI Use Cases and automations stall because data, systems, identity, security, or integration are not ready.
- Leaders fund projects without seeing the technical dependencies and trade-offs.
- Teams keep adding tools without retiring old ones.
- Security, privacy, and resilience concerns are discovered late.
- The technology estate becomes harder to explain, govern, secure, support, and improve.

03 What this Capability Is

Architecture is the practical ability to shape technology choices so the organization can build a coherent, usable, secure, and adaptable technology foundation.

It is not architecture for architecture's sake. It is not a beautiful diagram that no one uses. It is not a committee that slows every decision. Architecture exists when it helps leaders make better technology choices, reduce unnecessary complexity, and sequence investment in a way the organization can actually execute.

What Architecture owns

- Current-state and target-state technology architecture.
- Architecture principles and standards that guide technology choices.
- Major systems, platforms, dependencies, and constraints.
- Build, buy, partner, integrate, modernize, and retire decision support.
- Technology roadmap logic that supports enterprise direction.
- Architecture review for major platforms, integrations, AI services, automations, and high-impact technology changes.

What Architecture does not own

- Enterprise strategy itself. Strategy sits in Leadership.
- Detailed data ownership, quality, access, flow, or insight. Those sit in Data.
- All platform administration. That sits in Platforms.
- Every integration build. That sits in Integration.
- Every automation opportunity and value case. Technology Automation enables; Factory delivers measured value.
- Risk appetite, decision rights, and enterprise governance design. Those sit in Leadership Governance and Risk.

Five core behaviors

Behavior	What it means in practice
See	Make the current technology environment visible enough to understand systems, platforms, data flows, vendors, integrations, risks, and pain points.
Shape	Define the target direction, principles, standards, and choices that make the environment fit enterprise needs.
Sequence	Identify dependencies, constraints, risks, and roadmap order so work can move without constant rework.
Decide	Support clear build, buy, partner, integrate, modernize, and retire decisions.
Adapt	Update the architecture as strategy, AI capability, vendor options, risk, and operating needs change.

04 How the Capability Works

Architecture should begin with the work the organization needs to enable. The question is not, "What architecture do we want?" The better question is, "What technology foundation will help us execute strategy, use data, scale AI Use Cases, automate work, protect trust, and simplify operations?"

Simple operating model

Step	Plain-English question
1. Clarify direction	What strategy, value priorities, risks, AI Use Cases, automations, and work changes must technology support?
2. Map current state	What systems, platforms, data flows, integrations, vendors, security controls, pain points, and owners exist today?
3. Define target shape	What should the future technology foundation look like in simple terms?
4. Set principles	What rules should guide choices, such as reuse before buy, approved platforms first, secure-by-default, and retire what no longer fits?
5. Identify gaps	What is missing, duplicated, risky, outdated, disconnected, or too costly to keep?
6. Sequence choices	What must be done first, what can wait, and what decisions are linked?
7. Review and adapt	What changed in strategy, technology, vendor options, regulation, risk, cost, or demand that should update the roadmap?

Architecture rule

Architecture should make better technology choices easier. If the process only creates documents, meetings, and delays, it is not mature architecture. It is overhead.

Example

A growing services organization has customer records in one system, field work in another, finance in a third, and reporting in spreadsheets. Teams spend time chasing status and reconciling numbers instead of serving customers.

The Architecture capability creates a current-state map, defines a target foundation, and sets principles for which systems will be authoritative, which integrations matter first, which platforms should be reused, and which tools should not be expanded. In real life, Architecture shows up as fewer random tool decisions, clearer investment choices, and a roadmap people can actually follow.

05 Outputs, Evidence, and Measures

Architecture should produce a small number of useful outputs. The goal is not to document everything. The goal is to make major technology choices visible, explainable, and connected to enterprise direction.

Output	Purpose	What it contains	Quality standard
Technology Landscape Map	Shows what exists today.	Major systems, platforms, data flows, integrations, vendors, owners, pain points, duplication, risk, and constraints.	Clear enough for leaders and teams to understand the current environment without needing a technical manual.
Target Architecture and Principles	Defines the future shape and decision rules.	Target foundation, authoritative systems, platform direction, standards, integration principles, security expectations, AI and automation fit, and retirement logic.	Practical enough to guide real decisions, not so detailed that no one uses it.
Technology Roadmap and Decision Log	Turns architecture into sequenced action.	Priority changes, dependencies, sequencing, investment choices, build/buy/partner/retire decisions, owners, timing, and reasons for decisions.	Connected to strategy, Data needs, Factory pipeline, Risk posture, and available capacity.

Evidence that the capability exists

- A current-state technology landscape exists and is kept current.
- Major systems, platforms, integrations, vendors, and owners are known.
- Target architecture and principles are documented and understood by decision-makers.
- Architecture decisions are recorded and linked to strategy, risk, value, and roadmap priorities.
- Redundant, risky, outdated, or misaligned technology is being managed rather than ignored.

Useful measures

Measure	Why it matters
Percentage of major systems with named business and technology owners	Shows whether the estate is accountable.
Number of priority architecture gaps linked to strategy, Data, Factory, Risk, or People needs	Shows whether architecture is connected to enterprise work.
Percentage of major technology decisions reviewed against architecture principles	Shows whether principles are used in decisions.
Number of redundant or unsupported tools reduced, retired, or contained	Shows whether complexity is being managed.
Roadmap dependency visibility for priority AI Use Cases and automations	Shows whether technology enables value delivery instead of surprising it late.

06

Maturity: 0 to 5

Level	What it looks like	Evidence	Next move
0 Absent	No shared view of the technology environment. Major choices are local, reactive, or vendor-led.	No reliable landscape map, target direction, standards, or decision record.	Identify major systems, platforms, owners, and pain points.
1 Initial	Some architecture thinking exists, but it depends on individuals and is not used consistently.	Partial diagrams, informal standards, scattered roadmap notes, and inconsistent review.	Create a simple current-state map and name architecture decision owners.
2 Repeatable	Basic architecture views, principles, and review steps exist for major choices.	Current-state map, target direction, principles, and a basic roadmap are used more than once.	Connect architecture review to governance, risk, data needs, and priority AI Use Cases.
3 Defined	Architecture is documented, owned, communicated, and used in major technology decisions.	Named owners, approved principles, architecture review cadence, roadmap, and decision log.	Measure use of principles and manage duplication, dependencies, and technical debt.
4 Managed	Architecture is measured, governed, and connected to strategy, investment, risk, platforms, integration, automation, and resilience.	Dashboard or review pack showing gaps, dependencies, roadmap progress, decision speed, exceptions, and retirement progress.	Use evidence to continuously improve standards, roadmap, and investment choices.
5 Optimized	Architecture adapts continuously as strategy, AI, automation, data, vendor options, risk, and operating needs change.	Architecture is a trusted decision system that helps the organization move faster, safer, and with less waste.	Keep simplifying, retiring, adapting, and improving as the organization changes.

07 How to Build and Mature the Capability

Start simple. Most organizations do not need a perfect enterprise architecture function before they can improve. They need enough shared understanding to make better decisions and stop adding avoidable complexity.

Minimum viable Architecture capability

- A named accountable technology architecture owner.
- A current-state technology landscape map.
- A short set of architecture principles leaders can understand.
- A target architecture view tied to enterprise strategy and priority work.
- A roadmap showing priority gaps, dependencies, sequencing, and decisions.
- A decision log for major technology choices.
- A review rhythm connected to Governance, Risk, Data, Factory, and investment decisions.

Timeframe	Practical actions
First 30 days	Name the architecture owner. Map major systems, platforms, vendors, data flows, integrations, and pain points. Identify the top ten architecture questions affecting strategy, AI Use Cases, automation, reporting, or risk.
First 90 days	Draft architecture principles. Create a target-state view. Link the roadmap to priority Data, Technology, Factory, Risk, and People needs. Start a decision log for major technology choices.
First 12 months	Use architecture review in real decisions. Retire or contain redundant tools. Sequence integration and platform work. Connect architecture to investment planning, governance reviews, resilience planning, and value delivery.

What not to build too early

- A large architecture office before the organization has basic visibility.
- Detailed diagrams that leaders cannot use to make decisions.
- A standards library that no one applies.
- Architecture review for every small tool decision.
- A target architecture that ignores budget, capacity, risk, people, or value.

08 TSLA Support and First Moves

The organization must own its technology choices. TSLA can help leaders make those choices visible, practical, and connected to the wider TIO transformation system.

Where TSLA can help

Support area	Practical result
Technology Landscape Assessment	A clear current-state view of major systems, platforms, integrations, vendors, owners, risks, pain points, and duplication.
Target Architecture and Roadmap Workshop	A practical target direction, principles, priority gaps, and sequenced roadmap.
AI and Automation Architecture Review	Clear view of what technology, data, security, and integration foundations are needed for priority AI Use Cases and automations.
Architecture Decision Support	Facilitated build, buy, partner, integrate, modernize, or retire choices.
Thought-Partnership	Ongoing executive support as architecture choices change with strategy, risk, vendors, cost, and capacity.

What to do Monday morning

- Ask for a one-page map of the major systems, platforms, integrations, vendors, and owners.
- Identify the three technology choices most likely to block strategy, AI Use Cases, automation, reporting, or resilience.
- Name one accountable owner for keeping the architecture view current.
- Draft five plain-English architecture principles for future decisions.
- Start a decision log for major technology choices.
- Review the first version with business, data, risk, security, and operations leaders.
- Connect the architecture roadmap to the TIO maturity assessment and the first-year transformation plan.

A**Source Note**

This guide is part of the TIO Library. It is aligned to the TIO Framework, the TIO Technology Capability Domain Master, the TIO Capability Model and Maturity Assessment Tool, and the approved 8-section Capability Guide structure used across the TIO Library. It translates the Technology Architecture capability into practical guidance for leaders and practitioners.

It is written as a practical executive guide. It is not a technical data-management standard, legal opinion, privacy assessment, cybersecurity review, or professional assurance report. Organizations should apply their own policies, obligations, accountabilities, and professional review where required.