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Operate efficiently. Modernize effectively.
Deliver successfully.

A Government CIO's Efficiency Toolkit

The outlook is complex, but the focus is clear

Recent changes to trade policies and geopolitical agendas — combined with economic headwinds — are forcing government leaders to reassess budgets and operations, especially within the realm of government IT. As such, government CIOs across the world face a clear and urgent mandate: drive efficiency, modernize IT and deliver measurable outcomes.

Whether you're leading at the national, regional or local level, the success of your agency's IT strategy comes down to three key imperatives:

1. **Operate efficiently**. Show how technology improves productivity and reduces costs.
2. **Modernize effectively**. Focus on IT initiatives that directly support mission success.
3. **Deliver successfully**. Use clear, outcome-based metrics to demonstrate IT's impact.

This toolkit offers the structure and tools CIOs need to lead transformation with confidence — no matter where they serve.

Imperative 1

Operate efficiently

Turn IT into an engine for efficiency

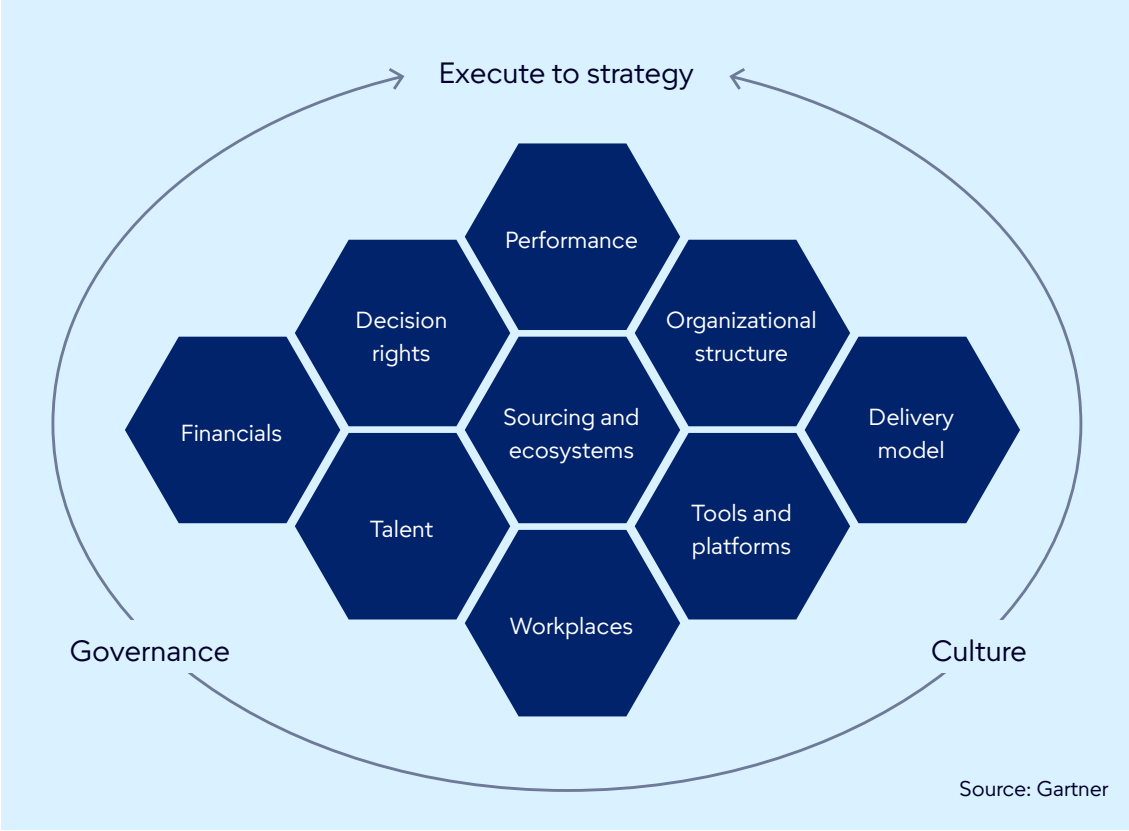
Governments around the world are placing greater scrutiny on public-sector spending — and IT is no exception.

Efficiency-focused teams are utilizing the expertise of engineers, HR specialists, attorneys and others to identify where IT can reduce costs and improve operations.

What does this mean for CIOs? The old approach of defending IT budgets isn't enough. CIOs must prove IT investments drive efficiency and reduce overall agency costs, while proactively targeting the technical debt that undermines the ability of their agency or department to deliver services effectively. This means:

- **Linking** IT projects to measurable financial savings
- **Shifting** from budget defense to proactive efficiency advocacy
- **Ensuring** IT directly contributes to workforce productivity and successful mission execution

Next steps: Use the Gartner IT Operating Model for Government to assess your agency and shift to a focus on resource efficiency with an emphasis on optimizing mission outcomes.



Source: Gartner

Tool to operate efficiently

Turn your IT operating model into a driver of efficiency and mission delivery

Use this tool to align IT operations with organizational goals, uncover cost-saving opportunities and improve workforce productivity. By identifying strengths and gaps in your current model, this tool supports a shift from budget defense to proactive efficiency.

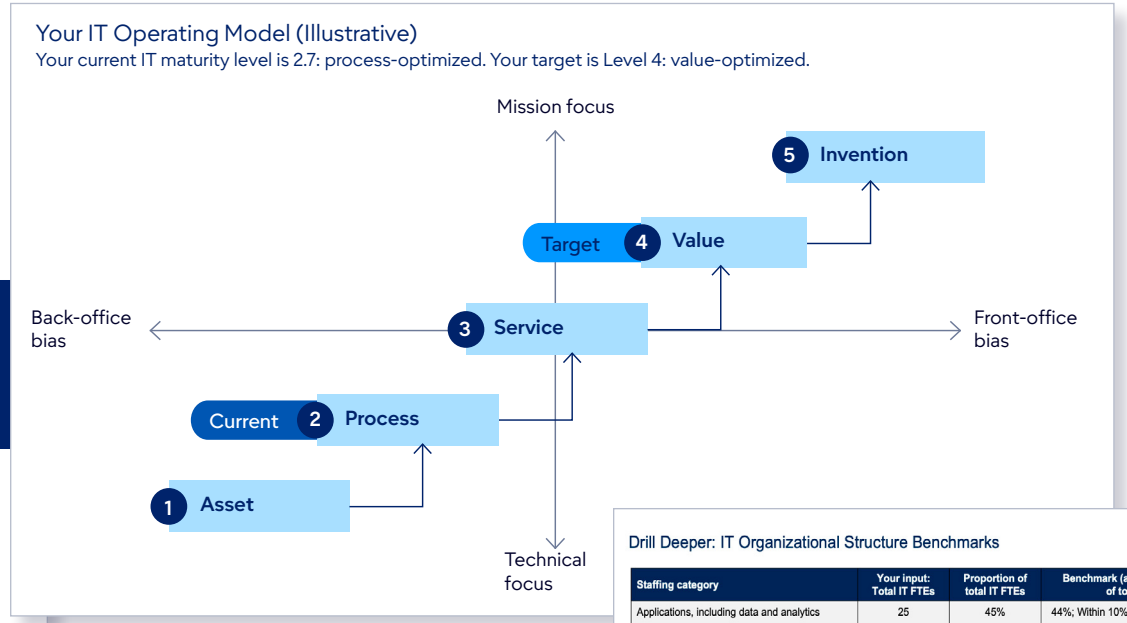
IT Operating Model Assessment for Government Organizations

Purpose

Help government CIOs evaluate and improve how IT supports organizational strategy, operational efficiency and mission execution.

Outcome

A clear, actionable roadmap that enables IT to drive measurable cost savings, improve productivity and directly contribute to mission success.



Drill Deeper: IT Organizational Structure Benchmarks

Staffing category	Your input: Total IT FTEs	Proportion of total IT FTEs	Benchmark (average): Proportion of total IT FTEs
Applications, including data and analytics	25	45%	44%; Within 10% of the industry average
- New functionality	7.5	14%	26%; Low
- Minor enhancements and maintenance	17.5	32%	18%; High
Infrastructure and operations	23	42%	33%; High
- IT service desk	9.2	17%	8%; High
- All other I&O (network, data center, IT operations, workplace)	13.8	25%	25%; Within 10% of the industry average
IT security (including disaster recovery)	2	4%	5%; Low
Planning (strategy, governance, architecture, business management)	5	9%	18%; Low
Total	55		

Imperative 2

Modernize effectively

Make modernization a measurable advantage

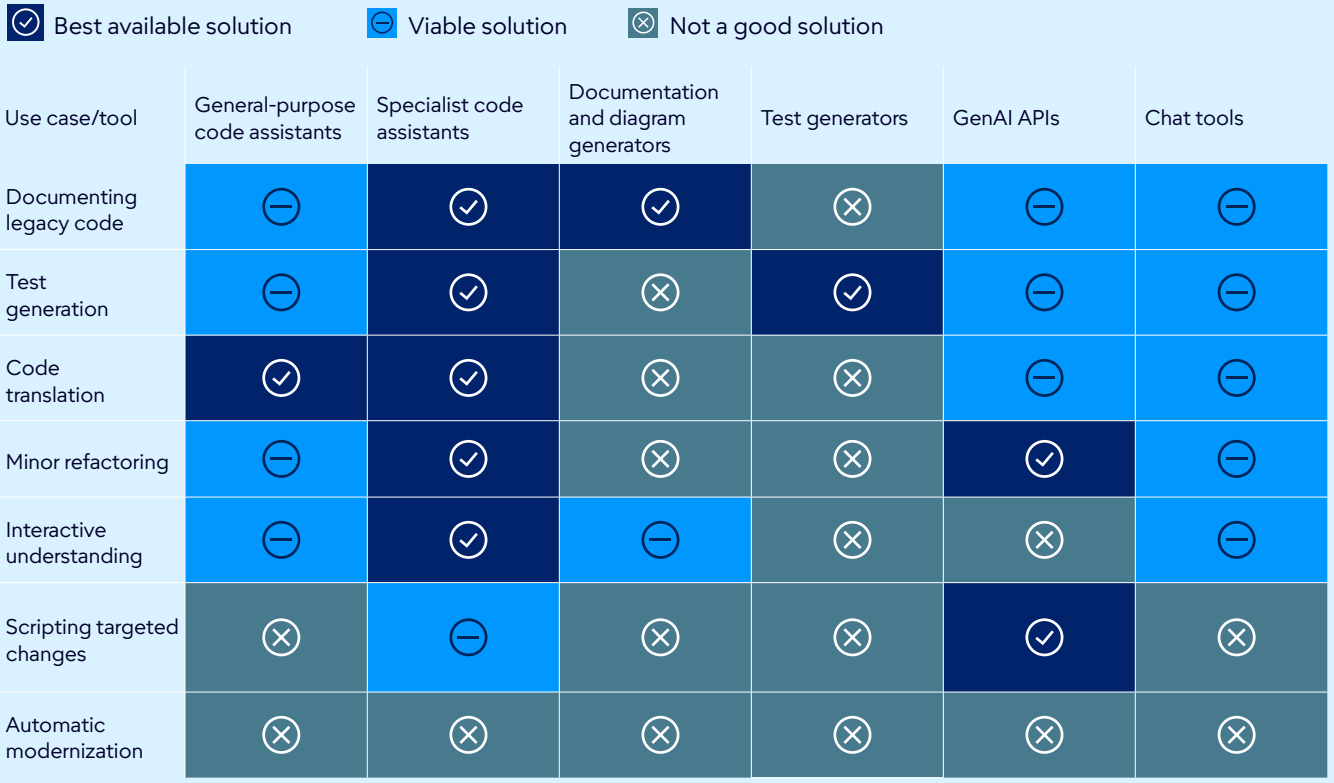
Every CIO understands the urgency of modernizing IT systems. But without a clear strategy, modernization efforts quickly become become disjointed, expensive and ineffective. Success depends on aligning IT upgrades with mission priorities and ensuring every dollar spent contributes to measurable impact.

Where to focus:

- **Software modernization.** Upgrade legacy applications so they are scalable, secure and cloud-ready.
- **Network infrastructure.** Improve connectivity, security and performance to support a modern workforce.
- **Interoperability.** Enhance cross-agency data sharing to improve collaboration and efficiency.
- **Data management.** Strengthen data governance, security and analytics to drive informed decision making.

Next step: Use the Gartner CIO Accelerator for IT Operating Model Action Plans in Government to build a clear roadmap for modernization.

Suitability of AI tools for various modernization tasks



Use case/tool	General-purpose code assistants	Specialist code assistants	Documentation and diagram generators	Test generators	GenAI APIs	Chat tools
Documenting legacy code	⊖	✓	✓	⊗	⊖	⊖
Test generation	⊖	✓	⊗	✓	⊖	⊖
Code translation	✓	✓	⊗	⊗	⊖	⊖
Minor refactoring	⊖	✓	⊗	⊗	✓	⊖
Interactive understanding	⊖	✓	⊖	⊗	⊗	⊖
Scripting targeted changes	⊗	⊖	⊗	⊗	✓	⊗
Automatic modernization	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗

Source: Gartner

Tool to modernize effectively

Enable the organization to achieve its strategic mission objectives

Use this tool to develop an IT operating model that connects modernization efforts to mission outcomes. This can make it easier to secure funding, demonstrate progress and avoid inefficiencies.

Accelerator for IT Operating Model Action Plans in Government

Purpose

CIOs can lead the creation of IT operating model action plans to evolve IT capabilities as a strategic priority in government.

Outcome

An IT operating model action plan to evolve IT's capabilities and continually deliver improved mission outcomes in government.

Sample results from quick assessment of current IT operating model components

Each dot represents a respondent's answer

		1	2	3	4	5	
Delivery model	Projects, not products — mostly waterfall, with manual handoffs; efficiency and predictability are the priorities						Products, not projects — mostly agile, DevOps and continuous delivery; speed and innovation are the priorities
Performance	Stakeholder and IT roles are measured differently (in terms of traditional IT metrics, such as on time, on budget and 24/7 availability)						Programs and IT are measured jointly in terms of shared mission outcomes and metrics
Workplaces	Program teams and IT teams work in separate offices/locations						Cross-functional program and IT fusion teams are co-located
Decision rights	Unclear or not applied consistently						Clearly defined and applied; product decisions are likely to be owned by program teams, and platform decisions by IT; high levels of collaboration
Talent	Specialists lacking mission skills focus on technical disciplines; they are permanent employees and are augmented with temporary contract staff						Versatilists have broader skills covering technology, business and so on; flexible talent acquisition allows for permanent or contract employees, partners, freelancers, crowdsourcing and so on
Organizational structure	A hierarchical organization is built around traditional IT functions and roles						Fewer layers comprise multidisciplinary, self-managed teams drawing on program and IT resources
Tools and platforms	Primary tools cover service management, time recording, infrastructure management and monitoring						An expanded toolset covers activities such as automated testing and release, and continuous delivery/integration
Sourcing and ecosystems	Supplier ecosystem management and outsourcing engagements focus on continuous improvement and TCO reduction						Bimodal sourcing capability reflects the different goals of run, differentiate and innovate; an alliance strategy supports exploitation of IT
Financials	IT budgets are held and controlled centrally; funding is allocated to projects; funding and allocations are determined annually						Program teams hold the budget for products; IT owns platform budget; funding is allocated dynamically (that is, with regular reviews) to create business capabilities

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Imperative 3

Deliver successfully

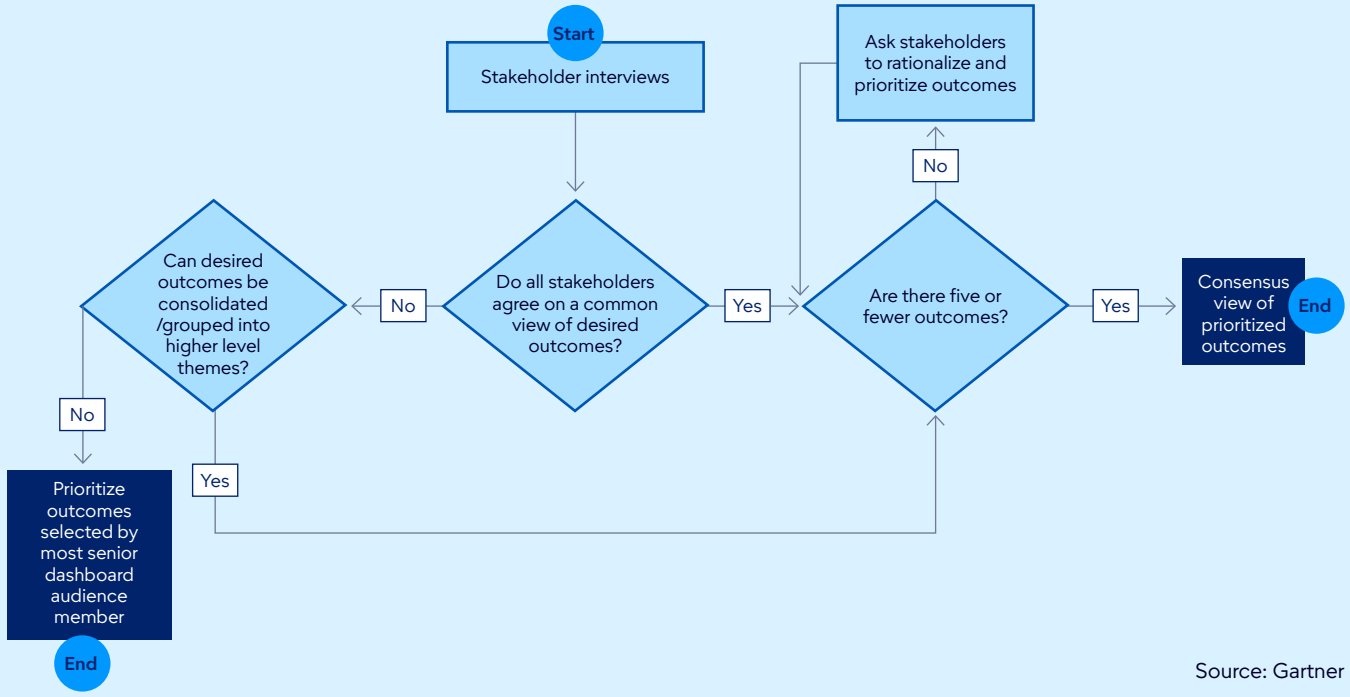
Demonstrate measurable outcomes from IT

To deliver quantifiable results from IT— and secure the requisite funding — government CIOs must be laser-focused on the desired outcomes. But they must also demonstrate the current and potential mission contributions from IT to a wide range of stakeholders, including citizens and security partners. To achieve success, CIOs need strong metrics, such as:

- **Objectives and key results (OKRs)**. Align IT strategy with agency priorities.
- **Outcome-driven metrics (ODMs).** Show how IT investments directly improve mission outcomes.
- **Real-time reporting frameworks.** Track and communicate IT's contributions in clear, executive-friendly terms.

Next step: Use the Gartner CIO Accelerator for Demonstrating the Value of IT in Government to build a data-driven framework for proving IT's mission impact.

Mission outcome prioritization decision tree



Source: Gartner

Tool to deliver successfully

Demonstrate IT's mission value with confidence

This tool helps CIOs quantify IT's contributions to efficiency, cost reduction and mission success, ensuring continued investment and support.

Accelerator for Dashboards Demonstrating the Value of IT in Government

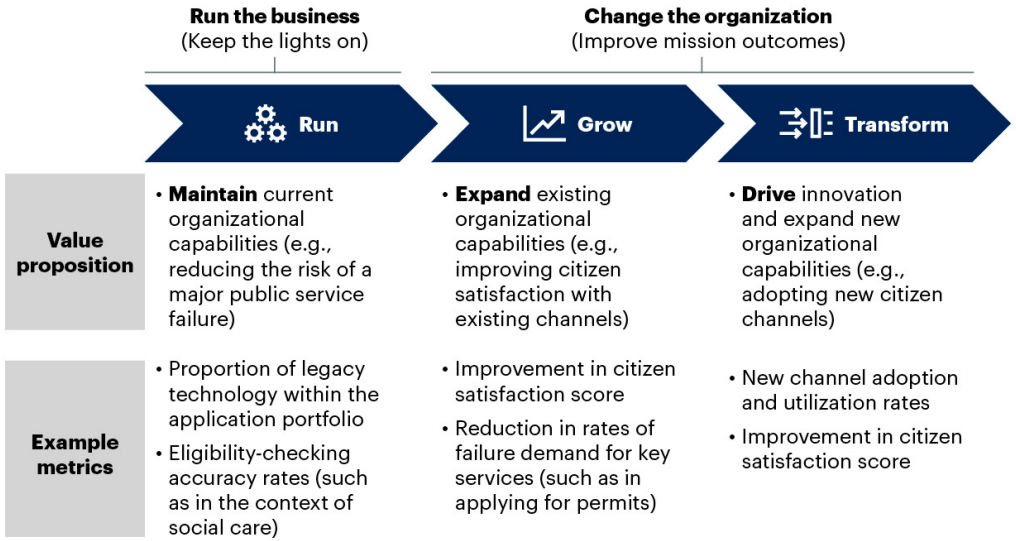
Purpose

Government CIOs can demonstrate the value of IT to wider government stakeholders through a dashboard linking metrics to outcomes that matter

Outcome

A dashboard for government CIOs and business stakeholders, organized around mission, wider business outcomes, IT value stories and supporting metrics

Tell a run value and a change value story



Actionable, objective insights

Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for government leaders:

Roadmap

Unlocking AI Value for the Public Sector

Discover five steps to build a secure, organizationwide AI strategy.

Download Now

Webinar

Agentic AI Trends in Government

Understand key agentic AI trends in government and how to prepare.

Watch Now

Decision Framework

Cost Optimization That Funds the Future

Manage costs strategically — and scale faster.

Learn More

Virtual Briefing

Lead Through Uncertainty and Change With a Resilient Workforce

Learn strategies to effectively lead your organization through uncertainty.

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