TENTHDAN AI

AI–Integrated 10-Dan

Organisational Progression Framework

The 10-Dan Framework measures the institution's authority to experiment, deploy, and scale AI safely. It does not measure the volume of AI adoption. Advancement reflects increasing governance discipline and earns permission—not technological throughput.

Dan Level	Organisational State	Ethical Posture	Primary Risk	Strategic Advantage at This Level	To Progress
Dan 1 – Awareness	Ad-hoc experimentation. Individual AI tool use. No central oversight.	Limited awareness of data sensitivity. Ethical risks largely unexamined. No defined accountability.	Shadow AI use. Data leakage. Unintentional regulatory breaches. Informal productivity tool adoption without visibility.	Low-cost learning. Cultural signal of innovation. Early AI literacy begins. Visibility of emerging AI usage patterns.	Executive sponsor identified. AI tool inventory completed. Basic risk and ethical briefing delivered. Acknowledgement that AI use carries responsibility.
Dan 2 – Exploration	Structured pilots. Early leadership interest. Draft AI guidelines emerging.	Draft ethical principles articulated. Early bias awareness discussions. Recognition of human impact risks.	Overconfidence in pilot results. Inconsistent documentation. Ethical intent without enforcement.	Controlled discovery. Safe experimentation environment. Early cross-functional collaboration. Reduced chaos compared to shadow adoption.	Formal AI owner/steering group. Experiment registry. Defined approval criteria. Named accountability for AI outcomes. Initial mechanism for declaring informal AI tool use established.
Dan 3 – Structured Experimentation	Repeatable pilots. Defined governance roles. Early policy framework active.	AI risk classification includes human impact. Human-in-the-loop for material decisions. Clear accountability owner for harms.	Policy–practice gaps. Legal/compliance misalignment. Hidden bias in scaling pilots.	Repeatable value generation. Measurable productivity gains. Reduced duplication of effort. Improved decision traceability.	Formalised governance structure. Risk categorisation model. Core team ethics training. Monitoring plan defined pre-deployment. AI experimentation may proceed in low-impact assistive contexts while enterprise data quality programmes mature. Process for surfacing and reviewing informal AI use patterns implemented to reduce concealment and normalisation drift.

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Dan Level	Organisational State	Ethical Posture	Primary Risk	Strategic Advantage at This Level	To Progress
Dan 4 – Operational Integration	AI embedded in business processes. Budget formalised. Incident tracking begins.	Mandatory bias and impact review before deployment. Data provenance documented. Explicit red lines defined (prohibited AI uses).	Scaling flawed models. Embedded bias. Automation without oversight.	At Dan 4, supervised operational experimentation becomes institutionally legitimate within defined governance boundaries. Operational leverage. Process acceleration. Reduced manual workload. Scalable deployment capability with guardrails.	Deployment approval process formalised. Performance and risk KPIs tracked. Legal and compliance integrated. Workforce transparency on AI usage. AI vendor onboarding standards defined, including transparency requirements and data processing safeguards. Periodic review of AI-influenced decisions conducted to monitor automation bias and behavioural drift.
Dan 5 – Organised Governance*(Midpoint: From capability to character.)*	Active AI governance board. Enterprise-wide policy ratified. Audit trails established. AI vendor governance integrated into procurement processes.	Independent risk review authority. Escalation procedures for ethical breaches. Documented accountability across business units. Cultural reporting mechanisms enable safe disclosure of AI-related concerns.	Governance theatre (process without enforcement). Over-complex controls stifling innovation. Ethics fatigue.	Executive and regulator confidence. Reduced board anxiety. Improved audit defensibility. Institutional trust in AI systems.	Independent review functioning in practice. Workforce training scaled enterprise-wide. Incident response playbooks tested. Measurable behavioural change demonstrated. Standard AI contract provisions adopted (audit rights, model transparency, data residency assurances, exit controls).
Dan 6 – Strategic Alignment	Multi-year AI roadmap. Defined risk appetite. Value tracking metrics in place.	AI strategy tested against organisational values. Harm scenario modelling conducted. Board-level AI reporting active. Vendor ecosystem accountability defined and reviewed at board level.	Strategic overreliance. Workforce capability lag. Regulatory exposure at scale.	Strategic defensibility and expanded authority within defined risk appetite. Capital allocation confidence. AI drives enterprise direction. Competitive positioning clarity.	Scenario planning institutionalised. Structured upskilling roadmap. AI investment governance disciplined. Value vs societal risk explicitly evaluated. AI supplier risk reviewed periodically, including lock-in exposure and cross-border data risk.
Dan 7 – Cultural Adoption	AI literacy widespread. Continuous monitoring embedded. Internal transparency standard.	Psychological safety to challenge AI outputs. Incentives aligned to responsible override.	Automation bias. Cultural complacency. Incentive misalignment.	Delegated experimentation authority operates within embedded guardrails. Cultural compounding.	Internal AI audit function active. Continuous learning loops embedded. Evidence of responsible AI challenges rewarded.

Dan Level	Organisational State	Ethical Posture	Primary Risk	Strategic Advantage at This Level	To Progress
	Informal AI use openly declared and routinely discussed in operational forums.	Ethical performance included in leadership KPIs.		Responsible decentralisation. Faster experimentation cycles. Workforce engagement uplift.	
Dan 8 – Adaptive Intelligence	Real-time model monitoring. Stress testing frameworks. Mature data governance.	Proactive bias mitigation. Independent third-party validation. Ethical impact simulations before scaling.	Complex system interdependencies. Model drift. Heightened regulatory scrutiny.	Adaptive resilience. Early detection of degradation. Fewer catastrophic failures. Strong regulatory readiness.	External validation embedded. Incident rehearsals conducted. AI resilience demonstrated under stress.
Dan 9 – Institutional Stewardship	Public AI transparency reporting. Industry standard participation. Cross-sector collaboration.	Independent ethics advisory involvement. Public disclosure of material AI incidents. Societal impact reporting.	Public accountability exposure. Political/regulatory scrutiny. Brand vulnerability.	Public trust and sector credibility. Trust premium. Stronger partnerships. Influence over emerging standards.	Demonstrated crisis resilience. Multi-year disciplined AI track record. Evidence of ecosystem leadership.
Dan 10 – Mastery & Custodianship	AI institutionalised as disciplined capability. Self-correcting governance systems. Continuous independent oversight.	Ethics inseparable from deployment decisions. Refusal to deploy where harm outweighs value. Mentorship and ecosystem shaping. Contribution to societal AI literacy.	Systemic influence risk. Global expectation pressure. Complexity from ecosystem interdependence.	The institution possesses authority not only to deploy AI safely, but to shape governance norms for others. Institutional power. Talent magnetism. Policy influence. Durable competitive and reputational advantage.	Sustained multi-year evidence of disciplined AI practice. External recognition of responsible leadership. Continuous improvement embedded.

Governance Integrity Principle

Dan progression is conditioned by governance integrity. Capability may not expand beyond the organisation's demonstrated governance strength. Advancement reflects earned authority to experiment and deploy AI safely, not the breadth of AI activity.

The additive score (0–40) reflects the breadth of AI activity and organisational capability. However, advancement beyond Dan 4 requires:

- Governance core domains operating at level 3 (“Operational & monitored”) or above
- Documentary evidence for governance core controls
- Documented procurement controls for third-party AI systems.
- Demonstrated mechanisms for surfacing and managing informal AI use.

Governance integrity includes oversight of AI vendors and contractual safeguards for externally supplied models.

The additive score alone does not determine maturity.
AI capability may outpace governance readiness; progression beyond Dan 4 requires institutional defensibility.

This ensures controlled experimentation can occur, while scaling remains safeguarded.