NITI Aayog

DEVELOPMENT MONITORING AND EVALUATION OFFICE

JOURNEY OF
DATA GOVERNANCE QUALITY INDEX (DGQI)

"Structured measure-and-reform approach to transform administrative data in India"

JANUARY 2026

Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office, NITI Aayog

The authors are Dr. Radha R. Ashrit (DDG), Dr. Devi Prasad Bhukya (Director), Ms. Adity Kumari (Monitoring and Evaluation Lead), and Ms. Soumya PS (Young Professional) at DMEO, NITI Aayog.

Suggested Citation: Journey of Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI), Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office, NITI Aayog

NITI Aayog

DEVELOPMENT MONITORING AND EVALUATION OFFICE

JOURNEY OF
DATA GOVERNANCE QUALITY INDEX (DGQI)

"Structured measure-and-reform approach to transform administrative data in India"

JANUARY 2026

Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office, NITI Aayog

Acknowledgement

Nidhi Chhibber
Director General
Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office
NITI Aayog, New Delhi 110001

This report serves as a vital record of our journey in assessing the data preparedness level of Ministries/Departments through the Data Governance & Quality Index. This publication is a testament to the persistent efforts of the DMEO team, whose dedication remains central to our mission of data-driven governance.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the DGQI team, with special recognition for Dr. Radha R. Ashrit (DDG), Dr. Devi Prasad Bhukya (Director), Ms. Adity Kumari (Monitoring and Evaluation Lead), and Ms. Soumya PS (Young Professional). Their technical expertise, meticulous research, and thoughtful contributions were instrumental in structuring this report into its final, impactful form.

I hope that this document serves as a useful reference for Ministries/Departments and other stakeholders, supporting them in strengthening their data systems and advancing data-driven outcomes across government.

Preface

Data plays a critical role in strengthening evidence-based policymaking, improving service delivery, and enhancing transparency in governance. Recognizing the growing importance of data as a strategic asset, the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), NITI Aayog, introduced the Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI) as a structured framework to assess and strengthen data governance practices across Ministries and Departments (M/Ds) of the Government of India.

Launched in 2020, DGQI was conceptualized as a self-assessment tool to help M/Ds reflect on the maturity of their data systems and governance practices. Over successive rounds, DGQI has evolved into a comprehensive and regular exercise covering a wide range of schemes and Non-Schematic Interventions (NSIs), including dashboards. To date, seven rounds of DGQI have been conducted, with the eighth round currently ongoing for FY 2024–25, covering initiatives and schemes across 74 M/Ds.

The DGQI framework has followed a phased and progressive approach. The first round of DGQI (DGQI 1.0) focused on establishing a baseline by assessing core data systems. With the introduction of DGQI 2.0, the framework expanded to include Data Strategy and Data-Driven Outcomes, emphasising structured planning, inter-agency data use, analytics, and the translation of data into measurable outcomes. M/Ds were encouraged to establish Data and Strategy Units (DSUs) and prepare action plans to improve data maturity.

Building on this foundation, DGQI 3.0 introduced a forward-looking perspective by integrating a dedicated Emerging Technology pillar. This pillar reflects the need to plan the adoption of advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, the Internet of Things, etc., by the M/Ds. The implementation of DGQI 3.0 through the VEDAM portal, a unified digital platform developed by DMEO, marked a significant step towards standardisation and efficiency. The portal enables Parichay-based single sign-on access, role-based data entry, real-time compliance monitoring, and automated score generation.

This document presents insights from the DGQI exercise and aims to support M/Ds in strengthening data governance, fostering a data-driven culture, and advancing informed decision-making across government.

Table of Content

1. Background

Administrative data forms the backbone of decentralized, evidence-based decision-making in the Government of India. With growing global recognition of the critical role of data across the policy lifecycle, both Central and State Governments have been strengthening their data ecosystems. Over the past two decades, initiatives such as Management Information Systems (MIS), dashboards, and Open Data platforms have significantly enhanced the availability, visibility, and use of government data.

However, despite these efforts, M/Ds continue to generate large volumes of administrative data through the implementation of schemes and programmes, which have not always translated into effective utilisation. The absence of a structured and common framework has led to several challenges. A few of the key challenges are:

- Data is frequently not granular or updated regularly, limiting its usefulness for timely decision-making.
- Issues such as poor data quality at the point of entry, lack of standard definitions and formats, and data being stored in silos across multiple systems are common.
- Limited accessibility and inadequate human resource capacity for data management further reduce the effective use of administrative data for monitoring, evaluation, and policy planning.

To address these systemic challenges, the need for a formal data governance framework became evident. Such a framework helps address these issues by establishing clear standards, roles, and processes for managing data across M/Ds. It improves data quality and reliability through defined protocols, enhances accessibility by promoting integrated and interoperable systems, and ensures accountability through clear ownership and responsibilities. By strengthening data security and encouraging consistent data practices, the framework enables Ministries to use high-quality, trusted data for informed decision-making and improved governance outcomes.

Data governance in the context of administrative data involves establishing high-quality policies and practices that oversee the entire lifecycle of information, from initial collection and storage to usage, sharing, and archiving. The primary objective is to strengthen internal systems to enable the effective and safe use of data for evidence-based policymaking, providing more accurate insights and a faster turnaround for analysis. By framing governance around the data lifecycle, agencies can ensure that cross-cutting standards are applied simultaneously at every stage, thereby enhancing the overall efficacy and robustness of digital information systems.

The key components of this framework consist of four interconnected components: Data Quality, Data Handling, Data Security, and Data Privacy. Data Quality ensures that information is accurate, complete, and fit for analysis; Data Handling provides protocols for the secure storage and disposal of data at rest and in transit; Data Security implements measures to prevent unauthorised access or breaches; and

Data Privacy utilizes techniques like anonymisation and masking to protect sensitive personal identifiers.

Additionally, the creation of a Metadata Catalogue (MDC) is a vital component that provides "data about data," facilitating interoperability between different departments and allowing siloed datasets to be linked for more holistic policy evaluations.[1]

2. Introduction of Data Governance & Quality Index (DGQI)

In this context, to institutionalise data governance practices across the Government of India, a mandate was given by the Prime Minister's Office to the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) of NITI Aayog to assess the data readiness of M/Ds. As a result, the Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI) was launched to evaluate the level of data governance within various M/Ds of the Government of India after a thorough review of international and domestic data maturity frameworks. The development of DGQI draws upon the following established frameworks:

(a) **The United Nations (UN) Governing Principles:** This framework, derived from the benchmarking study by Marcucci et al. (2021), serves as a global standard for data authority and control. It organizes governance into three primary categories: Processes (emphasizing transparency and accountability), Decisions (focusing on legitimate purposes and proportionality), and Data Handling (addressing security, privacy, and quality).

(b) **IBM Maturity Model:** This model identifies six stages for evolving data management practices: Initial, Managed, Standardized, Predictable, Managed Optimized, and Continuous Improvement. It highlights the integration of data governance into business processes to ensure data management is both scalable and proactive.

(c) **Gartner Maturity Model (GMM):** This model assesses across five levels—Unaware, Aware, Reactive, Proactive, and Managed. It is designed to evaluate maturity based on strategic impact, risk management, and organizational adoption, ensuring that data governance aligns with broader business goals. In the context of the DGQI, the Gartner perspective highlights the importance of risk-based approaches.

The analysis focused on mapping the questionnaire against functional areas defined by the UN: Data Strategy corresponds to 'Processes', 'Data Systems' to 'Data Handling', and 'Data Outcomes' corresponds to 'Decisions'.

1 Administrative Data Toolkit, Published by DMEO and CLEAR/J-PAL South Asia in 2024, accessed through https://dmeo.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-08/Administrative%20Data%20Toolkit%20DMEO%20dated%2025-07-2024_%20logos%20added.pdf

- **Data Strategy and Processes:** The analysis found that questions in the Data Strategy pillar are more aligned with Transparency and Accountability. However, the study noted that principles such as Fairness, Participation, and Lawfulness are currently underrepresented in the questionnaire.
- **Data Systems and Data Handling:** Roughly 48% of the questions in the Data Handling category focus on Data and Information Accessibility. In contrast, vital principles like Informed Consent, Protection of Privacy, and Data Proportionality receive significantly less attention.
- **Assessment of Preparedness:** The analysis evaluated the questionnaire's ability to measure a ministry's readiness for evidence-based decision-making using principles like Agility, Interoperability, and Generalizability. It found that "Replicability"—the ability to reproduce results across contexts—is the least addressed principle in the current framework.

This analysis highlighted significant gaps in the adoption of core data governance principles within Indian M/Ds. Specifically, the findings revealed limited adherence to the principles of "Fairness," "Participation," and "Proportionality." Furthermore, certain foundational elements, such as "Lawfulness," were found to be not measured in the existing approach. These omissions underscore the urgent need for a broader assessment framework to ensure truly comprehensive and ethical data handling across the government.

A major finding of this qualitative review was that the current approach does not measure "Lawfulness" (compliance with applicable laws), highlighting a critical need for a broader assessment to ensure comprehensive data handling. These factors, coupled with reliance on self-reported data, highlight a need for more robust, systematic data collection and evaluation methodologies in future assessments.

By viewing these limitations as opportunities for institutional development, the DGQI has moved beyond being a simple ranking tool to become a strategic roadmap. This framework provides a clear path to address gaps in Fairness, Participation, and Lawfulness, ensuring that government data practices continuously improve in both technical quality and ethical standards.

Thus, the DGQI has been designed as a structured framework to assess, monitor, and strengthen data governance practices across M/Ds. The key objectives of DGQI are as follows:

- DGQI serves as a self-assessment tool that allows M/Ds to review their existing data systems, processes, and institutional arrangements. By responding to the DGQI questionnaire, M/Ds can identify gaps, assess their level of data maturity, and understand areas that require improvement.
- DGQI provides a common and standardised framework for reviewing and evaluating data governance practices across all M/Ds. By using uniform parameters, pillars, and themes, DGQI ensures consistency and comparability of assessments.

- DGQI is intended not only as an assessment exercise but also as a reform-oriented tool. The insights generated from DGQI help M/Ds prioritise actions to improve data quality, data management, data security, and data use.
- DGQI encourages knowledge sharing across M/Ds by highlighting successful approaches and good practices in data governance.

3. Evolution of DGQI

The first phase of DGQI was conceptualized and implemented in 2020–21, with a primary focus on data systems. It was conducted in a self-assessment mode and covered 65 Ministries/Departments, encompassing around 250 Central Sector (CS) and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS).

DGQI was subsequently envisaged as a regular monitoring exercise to track data preparedness and use the findings to drive targeted reforms. Ministries and Departments were encouraged to formulate data strategies and establish dedicated Data & Strategy Units to enhance their data maturity.

Building on this foundation, DGQI 2.0 was launched with an expanded scope. It adopted a horizontal focus across three pillars—Data Systems, Data Strategy, and Data-driven Outcomes—and extended its vertical coverage to include Non-Schematic Interventions (NSIs) in addition to schemes. Under DGQI 2.0, 75 Ministries/Departments submitted self-assessment responses across twelve themes, covering more than 60 dimensions for over 630 schemes and NSI.

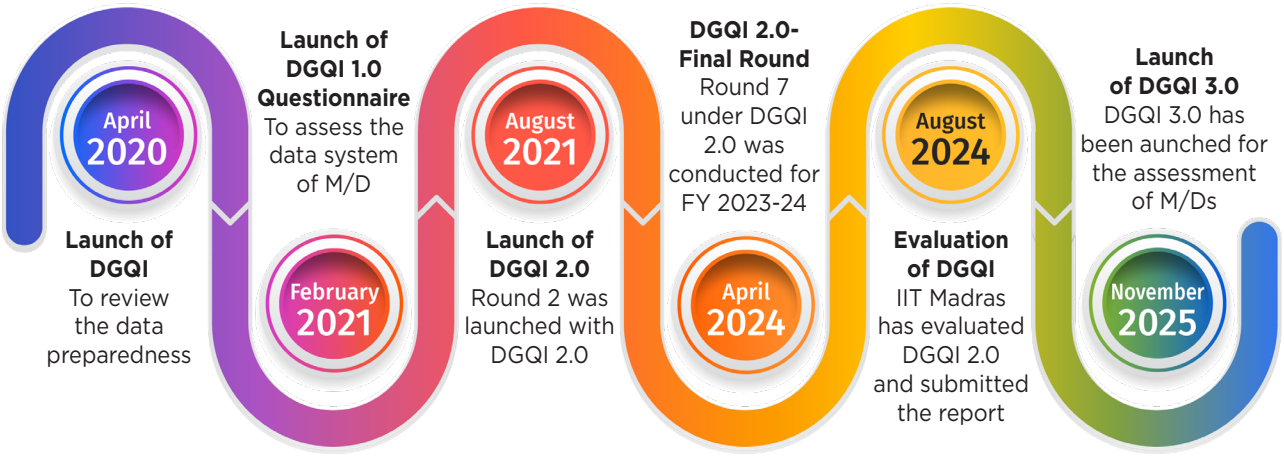

Fig 1: Journey of DGQI exercise

Recognizing the need to further strengthen and institutionalize the impact of DGQI, DMEO undertook an evaluation of the DGQI 2.0 framework by IIT Madras as the knowledge partner. The key recommendations included:

- The frequency of DGQI score assessments needs to be Annual. Conducting DGQI assessments on an annual basis ensures regular monitoring of data governance practices across M/Ds.

- DGQI aims to improve adherence to established data governance standards by the Government of India, including data quality, data security, data sharing, and system interoperability. Strengthening compliance ensures that data is reliable, secure, and fit for use in decision-making.
- Regular training programmes and workshops to improve awareness and understanding of DGQI among different stakeholders.

These recommendations were carefully examined and incorporated into the DGQI 3.0 framework. DGQI 3.0 establishes a robust foundation for a unified, secure, and interoperable data ecosystem, aligning with the Government of India's digital standards and initiatives. The framework is designed not only to assess existing capacities but also to drive systemic reforms, ensuring that government data systems are future-ready, resilient, and aligned with the goals of Vikshit Bharat 2047, driving evidence-based policy and efficient public service delivery.

4. DGQI- Rounds & Key Pillars

The phased evolution of DGQI across its three versions, with a gradual expansion of assessment pillars, is highlighted in Fig. 2 below.

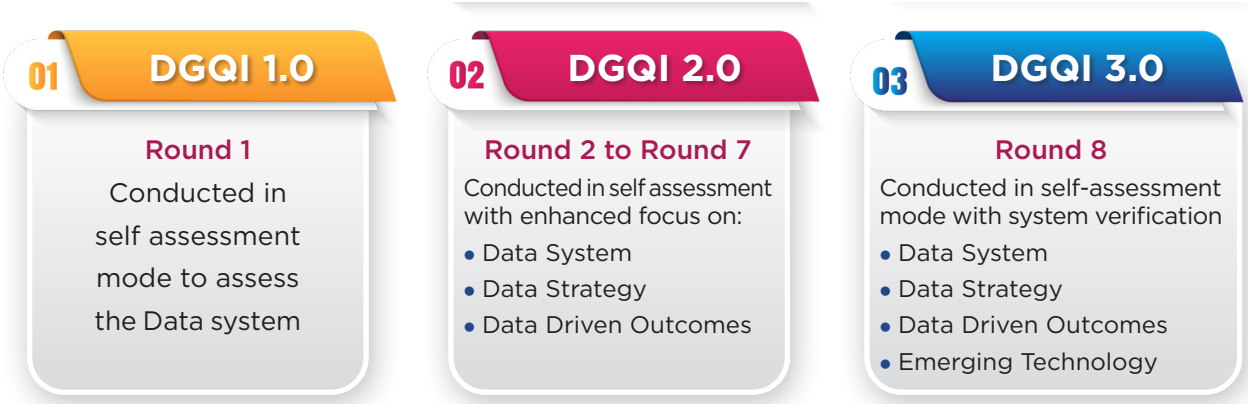

Fig 2: Rounds and Pillars of DGQI

The first round of DGQI (DGQI 1.0) was launched in February 2021. It was conducted in a self-assessment mode with the primary objective of understanding the current status of Data Systems within M/Ds. This round helped establish a baseline by assessing the availability, structure, and management of data systems.

Subsequently, rounds two (2) to seven (7) (DGQI 2.0) expanded the scope of assessment. While continuing in a self-assessment mode, these rounds placed enhanced focus on three key pillars, intending to move beyond basic data availability and assess how data is strategically planned, managed, and used to support evidence-based decision-making:

- Data Strategy to lay down systemic guidelines,

- Data System to ensure smooth processes of data generation, quality control, data management, and its use
- Data-driven Outcomes where data is utilized and widely shared by institutions to drive decision-making

Additionally, the scope of the questionnaire was vertically expanded to assess data systems not only for schemes but also for NSIs, including sectoral dashboards, citizen service delivery portals, and similar digital platforms.

Following this, DGQI 3.0 was launched in November 2025, incorporating further improvements to reflect the evolving global data landscape. The updated version was designed to make the assessment more focused, robust, and forward-looking in the following ways:

- Under DGQI 3.0, the questionnaire was rationalised by removing redundant and repetitive questions, thereby reducing the reporting burden on M/Ds while improving clarity.
- Greater emphasis was placed on strengthening data security mechanisms, reflecting the increasing importance of safeguarding government data.
- The framework also introduced a stronger validation and verification mechanism to improve the reliability and credibility of self-reported responses.
- The questionnaire was aligned with Government of India initiatives on digital systems and digital data governance, ensuring coherence with national digital priorities.
- In line with current governance needs, DGQI 3.0 sharpened its focus on core data systems and the adoption of emerging technologies, ensuring that assessments remain relevant and future-ready.

The eighth round of DGQI is scheduled for FY 2024-25 in a self-assessment mode with system verification, enhancing the robustness and credibility of the responses. In addition to the existing pillars, a fourth pillar, Emerging Technology, has been introduced. The key pillars assessed under DGQI 3.0 include:

- **Data Strategy**: Encompassing the formulation of strategic frameworks and institutional mechanisms that underpin effective data governance.
- **Data System:** Addressing the processes for accurate data collection, quality check mechanisms, management of data, validation, and integration of data assets.
- **Data-Driven Outcomes:** Emphasizing the deployment of data analytics to inform policy making, enhance transparency, and promote accountability.
- **Emerging Technology:** Advocating for the adoption of frontier technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain, the Internet of Things (IoT), Robotic Process Automation (RPA), Big Data, etc., to enable modernization and innovation within data ecosystems.

Overall, the DGQI rounds follow a phased and progressive approach, moving from assessing basic data systems to reviewing strategic use of data, outcomes, and the adoption of advanced technologies. This approach is planned to support M/Ds in strengthening their data governance and enabling informed decision-making.

5. Salient Features of DGQI

DGQI 3.0 provides a structured and standardised framework to assess data governance maturity across M/Ds, supporting improved data management, security, and use of emerging technologies for informed decision-making. The Salient features of the current phase of the DGQI exercise are highlighted in Fig 3.

Fig 3: Salient Features of DGQI

- **Alignment with the National Frameworks/ Policies and Goals:** DGQI is closely aligned with several national initiatives of the Government of India that aim to strengthen data governance, digital systems, and secure use of data. Policies such as the 'National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP)' promote openness and standardisation of non-personal data, which directly supports DGQI objectives related to data availability, interoperability, and reuse. The Policy on 'Adoption of Open-Source Software' and the 'National Policy on Software Products' encourage cost-effective, scalable, and interoperable digital systems, focusing on robust and sustainable data infrastructure. Legal and regulatory frameworks such as the 'Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023', along with the 'National Cyber Security Policy' and 'CERT-In guidelines', strengthen data security and privacy

practices. Further, standards such as 'Guidelines for Indian Government Websites and Apps (GIGW)' and 'Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 (WCAG 2.1' ensure accessibility and usability of government digital platforms. Together, these initiatives create an enabling ecosystem that complements DGQI and supports Ministries and Departments in improving their data readiness and governance maturity. The details of various Government of India initiatives on data governance, which have been used as the foundation for DGQI 3.0, are provided in Annexure I.

- **Focus on Tangible Outcomes through Auto-Verification Mechanisms:** DGQI places strong emphasis on measurable outcomes and evidence-based assessment. The framework reduces reliance on narrative responses by introducing auto-verification mechanisms, counter-questions, and system-based validation.
- **Aligning DGQI with Monitoring Frameworks:** DGQI is designed to complement existing monitoring frameworks like the Output–Outcome Monitoring Framework (OOMF) by strengthening the quality and reliability of underlying data systems. While OOMF tracks scheme performance, DGQI ensures that the data feeding into such frameworks is accurate, timely, granular, and well-governed.
- **Fostering the Adoption of Emerging Technologies:** To keep pace with evolving governance needs, DGQI introduced a dedicated pillar on Emerging Technologies. It assesses not only technology usage but also readiness, strategic planning, and institutional support, promoting responsible and effective technology adoption.

6. DGQI: A Holistic Approach

6.1 Components of DGQI

DGQI was introduced as a self-assessment exercise, in which M/Ds filled an online questionnaire hosted on a dashboard developed by DMEO. Under DGQI 1.0, scheme divisions provided inputs through this questionnaire to review their data systems, and these responses were used to compute the DGQI scores.

In later rounds, DGQI 2.0 was structured into two distinct components. Part A assesses the level of maturity in data management planning, data analysis, and data sharing practices at the M/Ds level, while Part B examines the maturity of data management practices at the individual scheme level.

6.2 Themes Under DGQI

DGQI 1.0 assessment was conceptualized as a self-administered survey with questions from 6 themes viz. Data Generation; Data Quality; Use of Technology; Data Analysis, Use and Dissemination; Data Security and HR Capacity, and Case studies covering 35 questions.

Consequently, DGQI was envisaged to become a regular exercise for monitoring data preparedness levels and utilizing this measurement for driving specific reforms.

M/Ds were encouraged to develop a data strategy or Action Plan and set up a Data and Strategy Unit (DSU) to strengthen their data maturity. The DSU was structured as a cross-functional unit with four components: Monitoring, Statistics, Analytics, and Technology, to ensure coordination across divisions and promote a data-driven approach. Action Plan aimed to lay down concrete plans to improve their data preparedness levels in general and DGQI scores in particular.

Building on this, DGQI 2.0 introduced two additional pillars i.e. Data Strategy and Data-Driven Outcomes. The Data Strategy pillar assesses maturity across two themes: Data and Strategy Unit (DSU) and Action Plan, focusing on the establishment of DSUs, proper documentation, and clear assignment of roles and responsibilities. The Data-Driven Outcomes pillar evaluates maturity across four themes: Synergistic data use within the M/D, Inter-Agency Data Collaboration, Prescriptive Analytics, and Good Practices. This phase of DGQI covered 64 questions under 13 themes.

To address the current challenges in data governance and digital systems, and building on the pillars of DGQI 2.0, DGQI 3.0 takes a forward-looking approach to technology use in government. It places a greater focus on strengthening data security, including protection against cyber risks, as well as the adoption of emerging technologies. In line with this, a new pillar titled “Emerging Technology” has been added under DGQI 3.0 to pillar encourages M/Ds to plan for and adopt technologies such as AI, Blockchain, etc. It also assesses whether M/Ds have clear plans, internal capacity, and support from external partners such as other government organisations, research institutions, and academic bodies. The aim is to improve the use of technology and data for better decision-making and service delivery.

In addition, DGQI 3.0 has improved the assessment process by reducing reliance on descriptive responses. Greater emphasis has been placed on system-based checks and automated verification, through follow-up questions and submission of supporting evidence. This approach strengthens the reliability and credibility of the assessment results.

The pillar-wise theme of different phases of DGQI is highlighted in the table below:

Table 1: Pillar-wise themes of DGQI

Pillar	DGQI 1.0	DGQI 2.0	DGQI 3.0
Data Systems	1. Data Generation 2. Data Quality 3. Use of Technology 4. Data Analysis, Use and Dissemination 5. Data Security and HR Capacity 6. Case studies	1. Data Generation 2. Data Quality 3. Use of Technology 4. Data Analysis, Use and Dissemination 5. Data Security & HR Capacity 6. Data Management	1. Data Generation 2. Data Quality 3. Data Analysis, Use and Dissemination 4. Data Security 5. Data Management

Pillar	DGQI 1.0	DGQI 2.0	DGQI 3.0
Data Strategy	–	1. Data Strategy Unit 2. Action Plan	1. Data Strategy Unit 2. Action Plan 3. Data Readiness
Data-Driven Outcomes	–	1. Data Management 2. Synergistic data use within the M/D 3. Inter-Agency Data Collaboration 4. Prescriptive Analytics 5. Good Practices	1. Synergistic Data 2. Inter-Agency Data Collaboration 3. Citizen Engagement
Emerging Technology	–	–	1. Accessible digital Engagement 2. Use of Emerging Technology
Total Themes	6	13	13

7. Breaking Silos through the Data Strategy Unit and an Action Plan

Creating a strong institutional setup was seen as essential to improve data governance and strengthen the use of data in policy design, implementation, and course correction. Under DGQI 2.0, M/Ds were encouraged to establish a Data & Strategy Unit (DSU), led by senior officers, to act as a cross-functional unit for improving data preparedness of their respective M/Ds.

The DSU was expected to reduce silos within M/Ds, strengthen monitoring and data systems, improve data quality and security, and promote regular use of data for decision-making. To support this, a clear Terms of Reference (ToR) was provided by DMEO. M/Ds were advised to structure the DSU into four units: Monitoring, Statistics, Technology, and Data Analytics. The role and responsibilities of each unit were clearly defined in the ToR. This ToR has been updated from time to time based on the need.

In addition, M/Ds were advised to prepare a data strategy or action plan with clear activities, timelines, and assigned responsibilities to systematically improve their data systems and DGQI performance.

Further M/Ds were also scored based on these two parameters under the Data Strategy pillar.

8. Emphasis on the Adoption of Emerging Technology

Under DGQI 2.0, greater emphasis was placed on the adoption of emerging technologies such as AI/ML, IoT, Big Data, drones, and Robotic Process Automation. This area was assessed in more detail under DGQI 3.0 to understand how M/Ds were beginning to use advanced technologies in their data systems. To further strengthen this focus, a new pillar on Emerging Technology was introduced in DGQI 3.0. This pillar goes beyond identifying which technologies are being used. It also assesses the stage of technology adoption, the presence of strategic guidelines or roadmaps, the extent of stakeholder consultations, and the purpose for which these technologies are applied, such as improving service delivery, monitoring, or decision-making etc.

The pillar aims to empower M/Ds to capture high-quality, real-time data, streamline processes, and deliver predictive insights that drive proactive decision-making by integrating emerging technologies.

9. DGQI Dashboard

DMEO, in collaboration with NIC, developed an online dashboard to enable Ministries and Departments to submit their responses to the questionnaire. During this process, AS/JS-level nodal officers nominated by each M/Ds coordinated and led the exercise at the M/D level.

Two types of user roles were provided to the M/Ds on the dashboard. Scheme divisions were given data entry access to upload information. At the same time, the nodal officer or designated head of the M/Ds was assigned an M/D Admin role to review, approve, and finally submit the data on the dashboard.

DGQI 3.0 has been. implemented through VEDAM, a unified portal developed by DMEO, which consolidates the four earlier DMEO portals into a single, integrated platform. The portal provides single sign-on access through Parichay, ensuring secure and standardised authentication for all users.

Consistent with earlier DGQI rounds, the portal enables M/Ds to submit responses for Part A and Part B of the DGQI questionnaire through role-based access controls. The number of users is capped at the M/Ds level and scheme levels to maintain data integrity and accountability.

The VEDAM portal includes an in-built monitoring and reporting module that generates real-time compliance reports, indicating the status and percentage of questionnaire submissions by Ministries and Departments during the designated data entry window. DGQI scores are system-generated, ensuring transparency and eliminating manual intervention in score computation.

Key Features of the DGQI Dashboard

- **Roadmap and Action Plan Tracking:** The DGQI dashboard enables M/Ds wise tracking of Data Strategy action points. It allows monitoring of progress against predefined timelines, helping M/Ds systematically implement data governance reforms and track their readiness levels.
- **DGQI Self-Assessment Questionnaire:** The dashboard hosts the self-assessment questionnaire covering data systems, data strategy, data-driven outcomes, and emerging technology. It captures information across CS/CSS and NSIs to provide a comprehensive assessment.
- **Automated Scoring and Ranking:** DGQI scores and rankings are automatically generated by the system based on submitted responses. This reduces manual intervention and improves transparency.
- **Reports and Analytics:** The dashboard provides detailed compliance reports at both M/Ds and scheme levels, along with progress and trend analysis across DGQI rounds.
- **Advanced Data Visualisation:** High-end visualisation tools present DGQI data through interactive charts, tables, and dashboards. This enables senior officials and stakeholders to quickly interpret results and identify areas requiring improvement.

Overall, the reporting dashboard provides disaggregated DGQI scores across sectors, pillars, themes, Ministries/Departments, and schemes, with outputs available in downloadable tabular and graphical formats to support review, analysis, and evidence-based decision-making.

10. Scope of DGQI Exercise

Till date, seven (7) rounds of DGQI exercise have been conducted. The 8th round of DGQI is currently ongoing for the Financial Year (FY) 2024–25, covering over 520 schemes and initiatives across 74 M/Ds of the Government of India. The DGQI score is generated for only such Ministries/ Departments that have submitted their response on time. The round-wise summary of participating M/Ds and schemes/NSI is provided below:

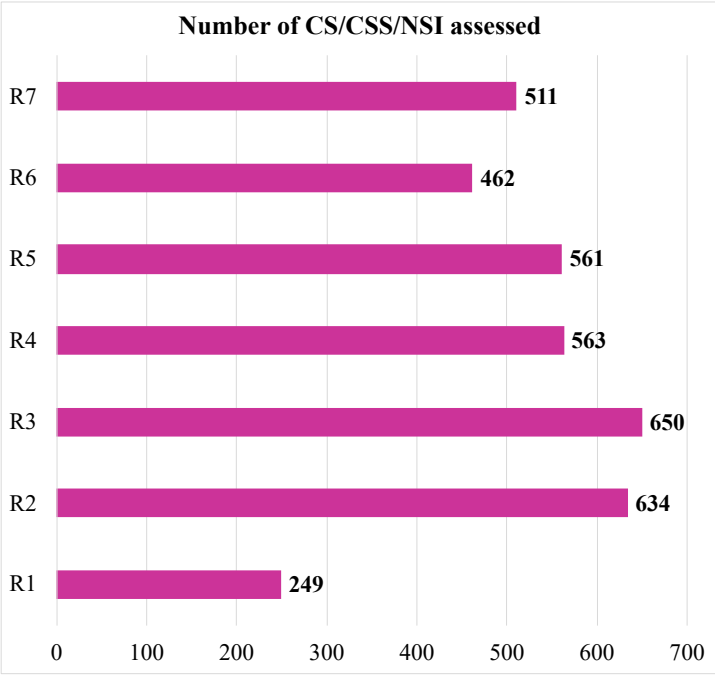

Fig 4: Round-wise number of CS/CSS/NSI assessed

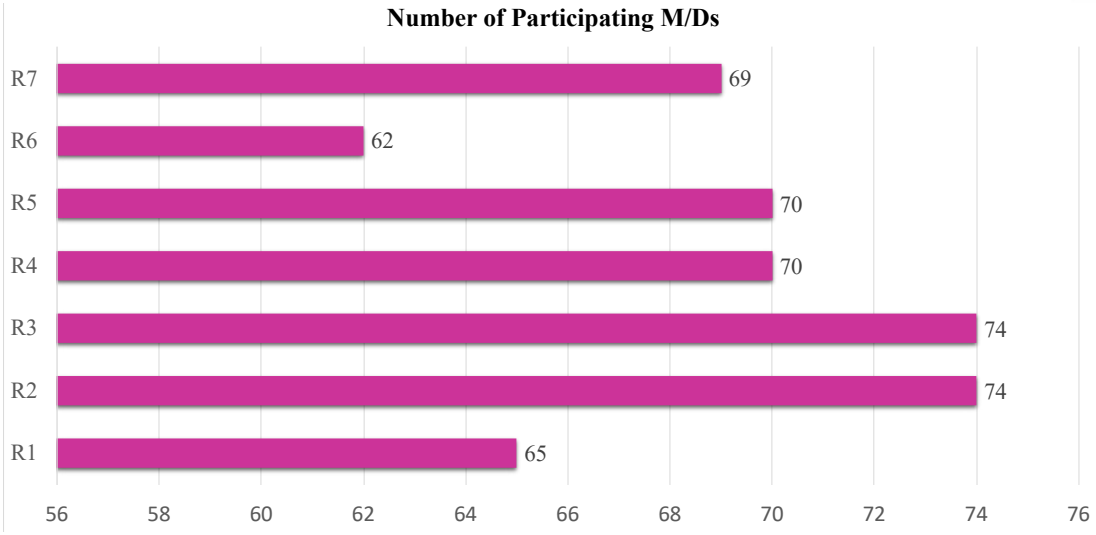

Fig 5: Round-wise number of participating M/Ds

11. Performance of DGQI Exercise Over the Year

To facilitate a structured assessment, participating M/Ds are divided into the following six categories: Administrative, Strategic, Infrastructure, Social, Economic, and Scientific. The consistency of DGQI performance varied across these M/Ds, with some clusters of M/Ds showing steady scores across rounds, while others displayed notable fluctuations. Sector-wise findings indicate that administrative and strategic M/Ds require additional support to improve their DGQI scores, whereas scientific Ministries demonstrate comparatively higher performance and greater consistency. Fig 6 presents the round-wise average DGQI scores of M/Ds, while Fig 7 highlights the pillar-wise average scores of the last 5 rounds.

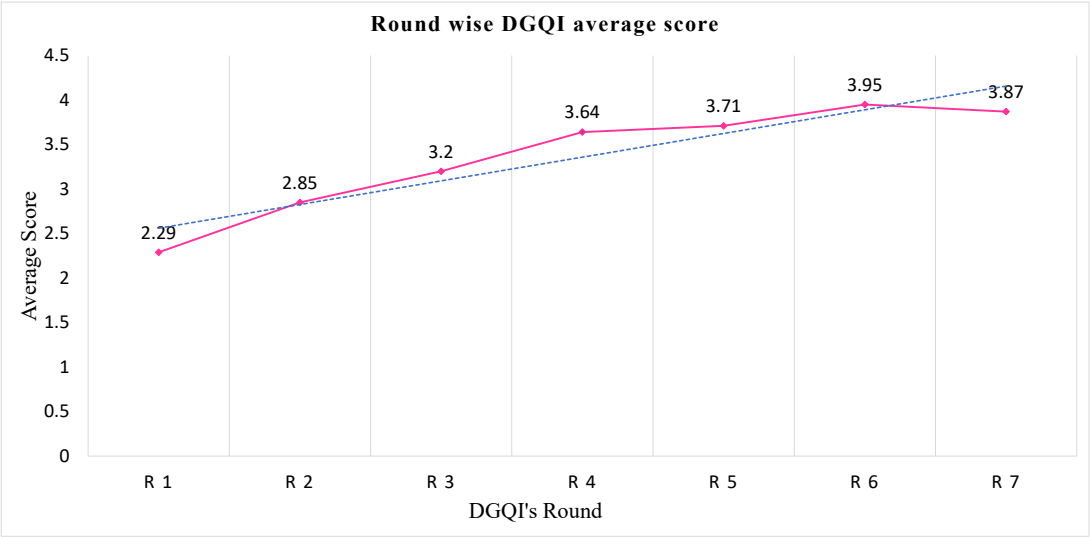

Fig 6: Round-wise DGQI Average score

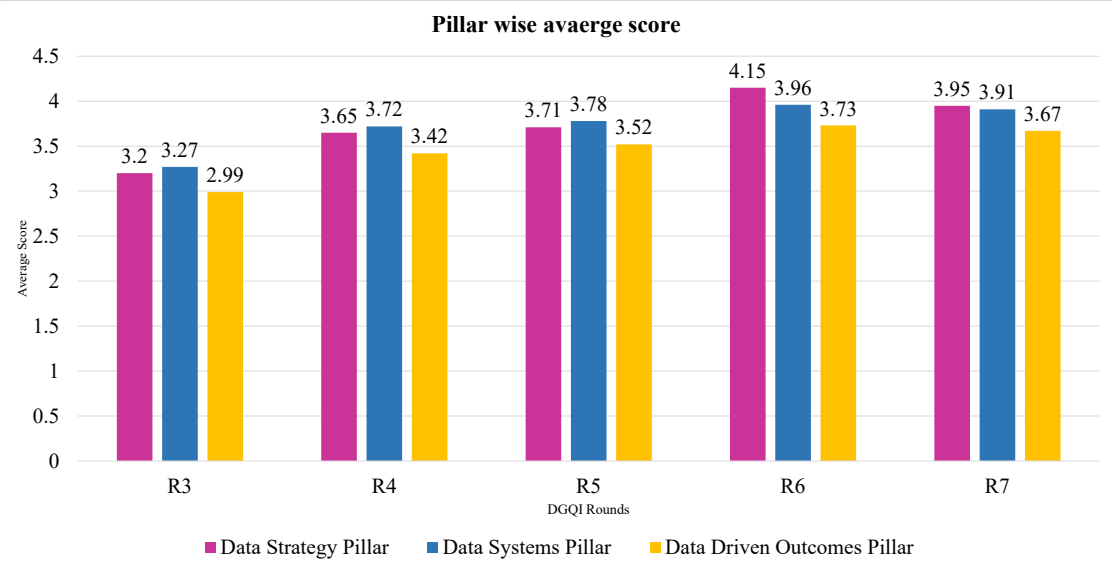

Fig 7: Pillar-wise Average score of last 5 rounds under DGQI 2.0

12. Challenges in DGQI

Despite its benefits, DGQI faces several challenges. A few of the challenges are as follows:

- Lack of awareness of existing data governance and digital initiatives of GoI among the M/Ds
- Data systems across M/Ds vary widely in quality, maturity, and automation
- Many M/Ds still rely on manual data entry, which increases the risk of errors and delays
- Limited interoperability between MIS platforms, capacity gaps in data management, and uneven adoption of data security

13. Suggestions for Further Institutionalization

DGQI plays a vital role in empowering M/Ds through robust data systems; however, there is scope to further institutionalise and strengthen its implementation. The following are the key suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of the DGQI.

- **Third-party on-ground assessment of DGQI scores:** To enhance the credibility of DGQI, periodic third-party, on-ground verification of self-assessment responses may be undertaken. DMEO can validate selected themes, verify supporting evidence, and assess actual data practices at the scheme and M/Ds level.

- **Regular Review meetings:** Regular review meetings with the Hon'ble member/ Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog can reinforce the importance of data governance across M/Ds. Such reviews would help track progress on DGQI commitments, address implementation challenges, and ensure accountability.
- **Institutionalising a recognition and incentive mechanism:** A structured reward system based on DGQI scores and year-on-year improvement would promote healthy competition among M/Ds and can motivate sustained improvements in data governance.
- **Capacity augmentation in data analytics and decision-making:** There is a strong need to strengthen capacities in data analytics, interpretation, and the use of evidence for decision-making within Ministries. Targeted training programmes, workshops, and hands-on support can help officials move beyond data collection toward advanced analysis and predictive insights for decision-making.

14. Holistic Approach of the Monitoring Mechanism

Another key monitoring mechanism employed by DMEO is the OOMF, which monitors scheme performance against defined output and outcome indicators on a quarterly or annual basis. While OOMF primarily focuses on what is being achieved in terms of outputs, outcomes, and performance metrics, the DGQI examines how effectively the underlying data systems are structured and managed to measure these achievements. DGQI evaluates critical aspects such as data availability, granularity, frequency of updates, automation, and overall data governance practices.

A high DGQI score indicates that a M/Ds has robust, reliable, and well-governed data systems. Linking DGQI with OOMF enhances the credibility and accuracy of performance data, reducing reliance on manual and self-reported information. As data systems mature, OOMF data increasingly serves as a strong evidence base for evaluations, impact assessments, and policy course corrections.

Annexure I

Data Governance Initiatives of the Government of India and their relevance in DGQI

S.NO.	Reference Standards	Standards Description	Relevance to DGQI 3.0
1	National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP)	NDSAP promotes proactive sharing of non-sensitive government data through standard classification, access controls, and the Open Government Data platform.	It directly supports DGQI's focus on data sharing and transparency. DGQI assesses M/Ds on data classification, access frameworks, data flow approvals, archival and retention practices, and data security and privacy, enabling evidence-based policymaking.
2	Policy on Adoption of Open-Source Software for the Government of India	This policy encourages the use of Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS) to improve cost efficiency, interoperability, and avoid vendor lock-in.	DGQI 3.0 promotes the use of open standards and scalable platforms for dashboards and MIS. Adoption of FOSS supports interoperable, flexible, and future-ready data systems assessed under DGQI.
3	Digital Data Protection Act, 2023 (Draft)	The Act establishes a legal framework for processing personal digital data, defines roles (data fiduciaries, processors), and mandates consent-based data collection, storage limitations, and grievance redressal mechanisms.	DGQI 3.0 incorporates data privacy as a core assessment area, ensuring anonymisation of personal data, responsible data use, and compliance with privacy safeguards in public data systems.
4	National Cyber Security Policy - 2013	This policy provides a national strategy for securing cyber infrastructure, strengthening incident response, and building cybersecurity capacity.	DGQI assesses secure data sharing, controlled access, encryption, privacy, and protection from cyber threats are assessed for ensuring secure digital ecosystems.
5	Guidelines on Information Security Practices for Government Entities (MeitY)	These guidelines outline best practices for application security, role-based access, encryption, backups, audits, and incident management. Also provides guidelines for Central Government CISOs and Employees.	DGQI 3.0 evaluates secure data management practices and institutional security arrangements, including the presence of CISOs and compliance with defined security protocols.

S.NO.	Reference Standards	Standards Description	Relevance to DGQI 3.0
6	Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW)	This guideline lays down standards for user interface, responsiveness, accessibility, and security for government websites and portals. Updated versions align with WCAG and mobile-first design.	DGQI assesses accessibility and usability of dashboards and portals, especially public data, ensuring inclusivity for all users, including persons with disabilities and diverse language groups.
7	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1	DGQI 3.0 evaluates secure data management practices and institutional security arrangements, including the presence of CISOs and compliance with defined security protocols.	
8	API Setu	API Setu is an Open API (Application Programming Interface) Platform from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, GoI, which facilitates secure data exchange across government systems through standardized APIs, supporting real-time data sharing.	DGQI 3.0 encourages automated data flows, interoperability, and reduced manual reporting. API-based integration supports reliable, timely, and verifiable data sharing across M/Ds and platforms.


सत्यमेव जयते
NITI Aayog
DMEO
DEVELOPMENT MONITORING AND EVALUATION OFFICE