



AI Readiness Assessment & Data Foundation Guide

Build scalable data foundations for
successful AI initiatives



Executive Summary

AI is now a board-level priority. Across the UK and Ireland, leaders are investing in AI to improve decision-making, automate processes, reduce risk, and create better customer experiences. The ambition is clear. The pressure to deliver is real.

Many AI initiatives show early promise but struggle to scale into production. They become harder to operationalise, difficult to trust, and struggle to deliver measurable value.

The issue is rarely the AI model itself. **The real barrier is readiness** – specifically data, operational, and governance readiness. Too many organisations attempt to build advanced AI capabilities on fragmented, inconsistent, or poorly governed data foundations.

The reality is simple: **AI doesn't solve data problems. It amplifies them.**

A model that performs brilliantly in development can fail in production when it uses incomplete data. A recommendation engine becomes irrelevant when important information arrives too late. A predictive use case never reaches deployment because nobody can explain how it makes decisions.

This guide helps enterprise leaders assess whether their organisation is genuinely ready to support AI in production – and if not, what needs to happen first.

For solution providers, this creates an opportunity to help organisations move from experimentation to production-ready capability.

This guide provides a practical framework you can use with your customers to assess AI readiness, identify critical data and governance gaps, and define high-value next steps.

It can be used to structure customer workshops, support early-stage conversations, and create a clear path from AI ambition to measurable outcomes.

Why AI Value is Hard to Realise

Many AI initiatives begin with strong momentum. They secure sponsorship, generate interest, and perform well in pilot phases. Yet moving from early promise to measurable business value is often where progress slows.

The problem is rarely the technology. More often, organisations move to scale before the right foundations are in place – fragmented data, unchanged processes, unclear governance, and outcomes that were never properly defined. When those gaps go unaddressed, AI becomes harder to operationalise, harder to trust, and increasingly difficult to justify.

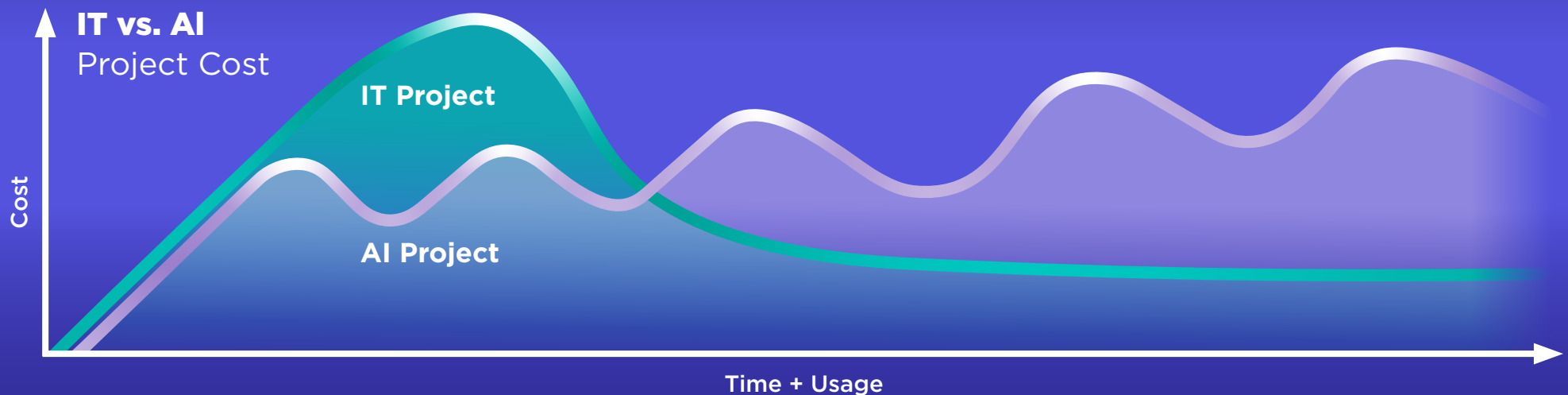
The cost model is different

Traditional IT investments are typically front-loaded. Once in place, costs level off while value builds over time. AI follows a different track – costs can keep rising with every additional user, every query, every automated workflow, and every production deployment. That means the business case needs to hold up continuously, not just at the point of initial approval.

Successful organisations ask these questions

- ▶ What measurable business outcome are we trying to improve?
- ▶ What level of cost is acceptable to achieve that outcome?
- ▶ Is our data trusted and production-ready?
- ▶ Can our operating processes absorb AI outputs effectively?
- ▶ Do we have the governance required to scale responsibly?

**Successful AI rarely begins with the model.
It begins with readiness.**



Why AI Initiatives Stall

The stall sequence

You've probably seen this pattern:

- A proof of concept demonstrates technical promise
- Stakeholders get interested and allocate budget
- The initiative begins moving toward deployment
- Real-world data issues start appearing
- Outputs become inconsistent or hard to trust
- Infrastructure limitations slow everything down
- Governance questions emerge that should have been asked earlier
- Momentum drops and the initiative gets quietly shelved



In most cases, the model wasn't the problem. The organisation simply tried to scale AI without building the foundation needed to support it.

Where organisations need support

These common patterns create valuable opportunities for advisory conversations. Many organisations recognise these challenges but lack a structured way to address them, creating an opportunity to position an AI readiness assessment.

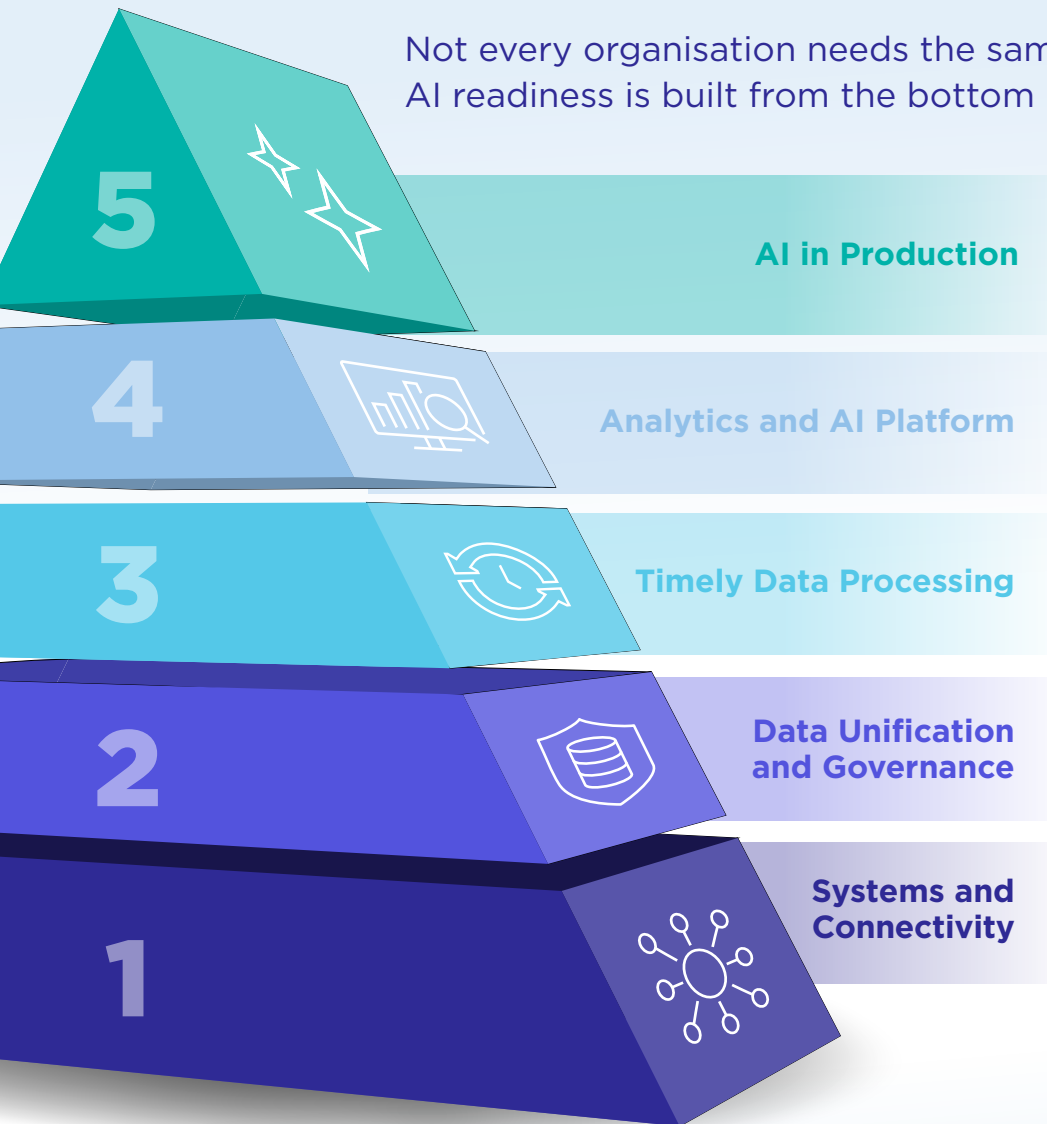
Use these insights to begin readiness assessments and identify next priorities.

Five failure patterns we see repeatedly

- **The data quality trap** – If your data is inaccurate, inconsistent, incomplete, duplicated, or biased, the model will learn those flaws and reproduce them at scale. Different systems define the same entities differently. Historical data has unexplained gaps. Nobody can explain where specific data originated. Poor data quality destroys trust, and teams spend more time cleaning data than improving models.
- **Fragmented data across systems** – AI depends on context. In most organisations, that context is scattered across operational systems, departmental tools, and legacy platforms that don't align. When models train on incomplete or fragmented data, they miss important signals and perform poorly in live conditions.
- **Data arrives too late** – Many valuable AI use cases depend on current information. Overnight refresh cycles for “real-time” dashboards. Stale data presented as current. When data arrives too late, predictions arrive too late. The model might still be accurate technically, but it's no longer useful.
- **Infrastructure can't keep up** – AI workloads demand different capabilities than traditional systems. Training takes hours when it should take minutes. Deployment is manual and brittle. Legacy infrastructure can't meet latency expectations. Even promising models remain trapped in development if the environment can't support them in production.
- **Governance and compliance gaps** – AI introduces requirements around explainability, privacy, fairness, accountability, and auditability. No formal framework exists. Unclear ownership. Limited ability to explain decisions. Projects get blocked at deployment because the organisation can't demonstrate it's governable and safe to use.

The AI Readiness Framework Pyramid

Not every organisation needs the same level of AI maturity, but sustainable AI readiness is built from the bottom up. You can't skip layers without creating instability.



Can AI be embedded into live processes, measured, governed, and improved over time?

You need production inference, workflow integration, monitoring, retraining, and business value measurement. In many cases, human oversight remains essential.

Can you build, test, deploy, and manage models systematically?

You need experiment tracking, model versioning, feature engineering, deployment workflows, and monitoring. Without this, models remain ad hoc and hard to operationalise.

Can you work with data quickly enough for the use case?

You need change data capture, event processing for time-sensitive scenarios, and freshness monitoring. Without this, AI is limited to historical analysis when operational responsiveness is more valuable.

Can you trust the data you're using and govern it effectively?

You need quality controls, master data discipline, lineage tracking, and proper access controls. Without this, AI teams waste time wrangling data, and business teams struggle to trust outputs.

Can you access the data you need from the systems that matter?

You need reliable integration, consistent connectivity, secure access, and monitoring.



Many organisations try to begin at the top. The ones that make genuine progress put the right foundational layers in place first.

How to use this assessment:

Use this framework to assess where an organisation sits today, identify gaps across foundational layers, and prioritise where to focus first.

AI Readiness Assessment Model

Score each capability honestly from **1** to **5**

1 = Critical issues, no defined processes **2** = Significant gaps, limited processes.

3 = Functional for current operations **4** = Established and scalable foundation

5 = Production-ready for AI.

How to use this assessment:

- Run this as a stakeholder workshop
- Score each dimension collaboratively
- Identify the highest priority gaps
- Build a practical roadmap

Data Accessibility	(15 Points)
Can you access data from systems needed for AI use cases?	
Can teams find, understand, and evaluate relevant data sources?	
Can authorised users access data without excessive delay?	

Data Governance	(15 Points)
Are privacy and access controls strong enough for AI?	
Can you trace data from source to model to output?	
Do you have clear policies for responsible AI use?	

Operational AI	(15 Points)
Can predictions be deployed at production scale?	
Do you monitor performance, drift, and operational behaviour?	
Can models be updated efficiently as conditions change?	

Data Quality	(15 Points)
Are quality checks defined, automated, and monitored?	
Do you have sufficient data for target use cases?	
Are key entities and definitions aligned across systems?	

Infrastructure Capability	(15 Points)
Can your environment support AI training and inference demands?	
Can you support the volume and variety of data AI requires?	
Can you move data efficiently for training and operational use?	

Organisational Readiness	(15 Points)
Do you have the right mix of technical, governance, and business skills?	
Are AI initiatives tied to business outcomes and sponsors?	
Is your organisation ready to adopt AI-enabled ways of working and does it have the right skills?	

Data Timeliness	(15 Points)
Is data current enough for intended use cases?	
Can you identify and propagate changes efficiently?	
Can you support event-driven or near-real-time scenarios?	

AI Platform Maturity	(15 Points)
Can features be built and reused systematically?	
Do teams have tools for collaboration and reproducibility?	
Can models be deployed, versioned, monitored, and updated reliably?	

Your total AI Readiness Score

/ 120



Find out what your score means on the next page...

What Your Score Means

24-50 Foundation building required

You're at an early stage. Strong ambition exists, but foundational gaps are significant. Focus on: mapping critical data sources, identifying 1-2 realistic use cases, improving data access, defining baseline governance, and establishing clear ownership.

Takeaway: Further foundational work is recommended before scaling AI initiatives.

Priority: Foundational data, access, and governance improvements

51-80 Selective AI readiness

You have important building blocks, but readiness varies by domain. Focus on: prioritising use cases aligned to current strengths, closing critical quality and governance gaps, improving deployment practices, and avoiding spreading effort too broadly.

Takeaway: You can make progress with well-chosen use cases, but you'll struggle if you try to do everything at once.

Priority: Targeted use cases and closing critical readiness gaps

81-105 Production AI ready

You have a strong base for operational AI. Focus on: expanding into additional use cases strategically, optimising performance and latency, strengthening monitoring and retraining, and deepening business outcome measurement.

Takeaway: You're in a good position. Focus on scaling what works.

Priority: Scaling AI into production and improving performance

106-120 AI leadership position

You're operating with mature foundations. Focus on: optimisation, innovation, strategic differentiation, and sharing learnings across the organisation.

Takeaway: You're ahead of most. The challenge now is maintaining discipline while innovating.

Priority: Optimisation, innovation, and strategic expansion



Practical Actions to Improve AI Readiness

Data access and integration

Identify the 3–5 most important data sources for priority use cases. Understand how each is currently accessed. Reduce manual extraction. Create consistent access patterns.

✓ **Quick win: Connect one critical source end-to-end before attempting broader integration.**

How We Can Help: *Deliver integration and data access modernisation projects for priority systems.*

Data quality and consistency

Define what "good data" means for key entities. Identify common issues (duplicates, missing values). Introduce validation rules for critical datasets. Assign clear ownership. Track a small number of quality metrics that matter.

✓ **Quick win: Improve quality for one priority use case rather than the whole data estate.**

How We Can Help: *Package this as a data quality assessment and remediation service for key use cases.*

Data timelines

Identify where latency exists. Decide which use cases genuinely need near real-time data. Introduce incremental updates. Implement change data capture. Reduce unnecessary delays.

✓ **Quick win: Move one important dataset from overnight batch to more frequent refresh and measure the impact.**

How We Can Help: *Identify latency gaps and design event-driven or near real-time data solutions.*

Governance and control

Identify sensitive data in AI use cases. Apply access controls consistently. Document lineage for critical flows. Define ownership for AI outputs. Introduce explainability expectations.

✓ **Quick win: Document one use case end-to-end with full traceability.**

How We Can Help: *Introduce governance frameworks, access controls, and explainability approaches.*

Infrastructure and platform

Assess whether the current infrastructure supports model training and deployment. Ensure the ability to handle both structured and unstructured data. Identify key bottlenecks and establish appropriate test environments. Introduce baseline monitoring capabilities.

✓ **Quick win: Validate one complete model lifecycle and fix the biggest bottleneck.**

How We Can Help: *Assess and modernise platforms to support scalable AI workloads.*

AI and operational capability

Track model versions systematically. Define how models move to production. Monitor for drift. Establish a retraining approach. Align training and production pipelines.

✓ **Quick win: Move one model from notebook to controlled deployment with proper versioning.**

How We Can Help: *Support model lifecycle management, deployment, and monitoring practices.*

Business alignment and adoption

Define success in business terms. Assign business ownership. Prioritise based on value and feasibility. Embed outputs into workflows. Gather user feedback.

✓ **Quick win: Choose one use case with measurable value achievable within 90 days.**

How We Can Help: *Facilitate use case prioritisation and embed AI into business workflows.*

Don't try to solve everything simultaneously. Pick one or two priority use cases, identify the most important blockers, address them systematically, and build confidence through visible progress. This is often where organisations benefit from a structured review with an experienced advisor.

60-120 Day AI Enablement Roadmap

Phase 1

Assess and prioritise



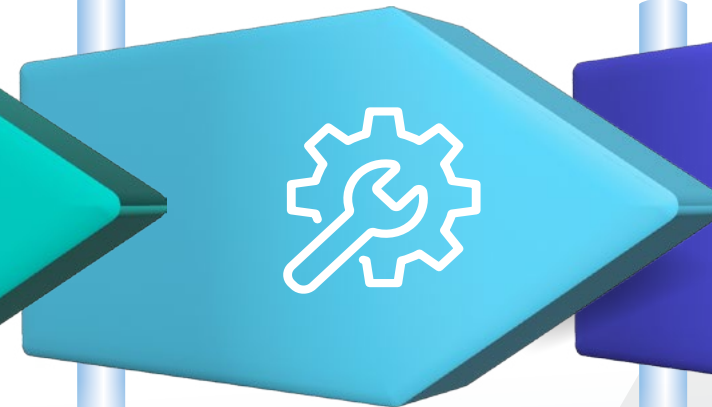
Days 1-30

- ▶ Complete the readiness assessment.
- ▶ Identify gaps and blockers.
- ▶ Map priority data sources.
- ▶ Define 2-3 use cases.
- ▶ Align sponsors and stakeholders.
- ▶ Establish realistic expectations and goals.

Partner role: *Facilitate readiness workshops, align stakeholders, and identify priority use cases*

Phase 2

Strengthen the foundation



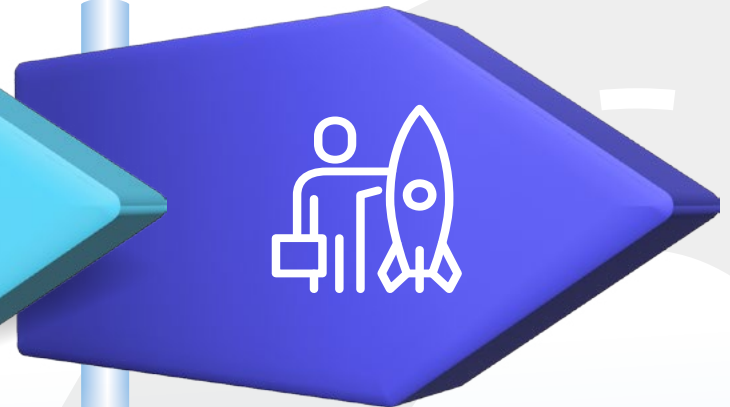
Days 31-75

- ▶ Improve access to priority data sources.
- ▶ Introduce quality and governance controls.
- ▶ Close critical timeliness gaps.
- ▶ Validate platform requirements.
- ▶ Address the biggest blockers first.

Partner role: *Deliver targeted improvements in data access, quality, governance, and infrastructure.*

Phase 3

Prepare for or launch a pilot



Days 76-120

- ▶ Confirm the pilot use case and success measures.
- ▶ Establish deployment and monitoring approach.
- ▶ Integrate with business workflows (not just a demo).
- ▶ Deliver measurable value.
- ▶ Capture lessons for scaling.

Partner role: *Co-design and deploy pilot use cases, ensuring integration into real business workflows*



Each phase represents a clear opportunity to deliver value through structured organisational engagements. The goal isn't to transform everything in 120 days. It's to reduce uncertainty, focus effort, and create a realistic path forward that builds organisational confidence.

Next Steps for Partners

Run an AI readiness assessment to identify growth opportunities and readiness priorities.

Partner with InterSystems for software data platforms that deliver AI readiness engagements and grow your data and AI services.

- ▶ Strengthen strategic relationships with organisations
- ▶ Secure AI projects by delivering early data access, transformation, and production-ready quality
- ▶ Accelerate AI adoption with a firm foundation
- ▶ Build clear transformation priorities

[Ask our Experts](#)



About InterSystems

InterSystems helps organisations build the data foundations required for AI in complex and regulated environments. Working with partners globally, InterSystems supports organisations in improving access to distributed data, enabling trusted and timely information flows, strengthening governance and operational readiness, and moving from AI ambition to measurable business value.

AI success depends not only on models, but on the strength of the data foundation behind them. If you want AI to work in production, start by making your data ready for it.



[Solution Partner Programme](#)

[Become a Partner](#)

