

DIMO – Governing data and artificial intelligence in local government

The Data Intelligence and Management Office as a policy and governance initiative in the Province of Alicante

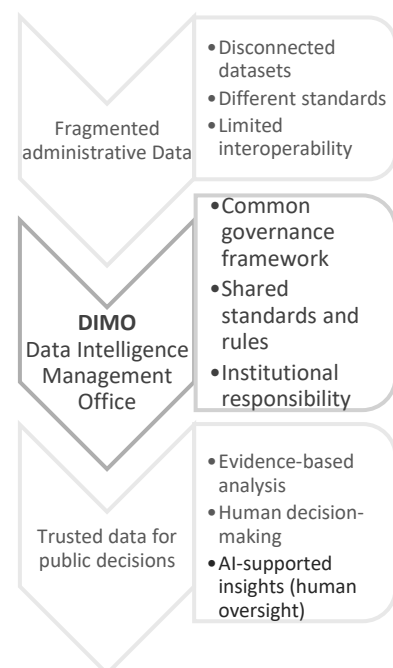
Province of Alicante · Spain · Subnational government

The public policy challenge

Local governments increasingly rely on data to design and implement public policies. However, administrative information is often fragmented across departments, managed under heterogeneous standards and disconnected from territorial reality.

This fragmentation limits evidence-based decision-making, increases institutional and legal risk, and weakens transparency and public trust. It also constrains the responsible use of advanced analytics and artificial intelligence, which require reliable and traceable data foundations.

For subnational governments supporting small and medium-sized municipalities, this challenge is structural rather than technical.



A strategic institutional decision

Facing this situation, the Provincial Council of Alicante, through Suma Tax Management Agency, made a clear institutional choice: **to strengthen data governance before expanding the use of artificial intelligence in public administration.**

Rather than deploying isolated digital tools, the institution adopted a governance-first approach focused on building long-term public-sector capacity.

This decision marked a shift from digitalisation towards institutional intelligence.

From digitalisation to governance

This strategic shift led to the creation of **DIMO (Data Intelligence and Management Office)** as a permanent institutional framework.

DIMO was conceived not as a technological project, but as a policy and governance initiative designed to ensure consistent data management, transparency and responsible use of artificial intelligence across local government.

A governance framework for trustworthy AI

DIMO establishes shared principles, standards and institutional responsibilities that enable administrative and territorial data to be integrated and interpreted consistently.

Within this framework:

- data governance precedes AI deployment
- interoperability and traceability are ensured
- analytical processes remain transparent
- human oversight is maintained at all stages

AI is used exclusively as a decision-support tool. Final decisions remain under public authority.

Alignment with OECD principles

The initiative reflects key elements of the OECD approach to *Governing with Artificial Intelligence*:

- governance before technology
 - human-centred and trustworthy AI
 - transparency and explainability
 - institutional accountability
 - public value orientation
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Public value generated

The initiative contributes to tangible public value by:

- improving data quality and consistency
 - supporting evidence-based policymaking
 - reducing institutional and legal risk
 - strengthening coordination between municipalities
 - enhancing transparency and public trust
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Sustainability and transferability

DIMO is designed as a permanent institutional capability. It does not depend on specific individuals or proprietary technologies and can evolve alongside regulatory and policy developments.

Its governance model is transferable to other subnational administrations facing similar challenges related to data fragmentation and responsible use of artificial intelligence.

Policy insight

Effective AI in government starts with governing data — and governing institutions.