RBI Data Governance Guidance Framework (2026)

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Why in News?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a comprehensive draft framework titled "Guidance on Regulatory Expectations for Data Governance."

- **Aim -** To significantly upgrade data risk management, security, and accountability across all Regulated Entities (REs), including commercial banks and NBFCs.
- **Framework -** The RBI has mandated a two-tier organizational framework to oversee data governance.

Board-Level Data Governance Committee	• REs must establish a dedicated board-level committee (or assign the role to an existing one). • It is to formulate governance frameworks, periodically review them, and analyze reports concerning data governance and material breaches.
Executive-Level Data Governance Committee	• Operating at the ground level, this cross-functional committee will consist of representatives from Data Management, IT, Information Security, Risk Management, Compliance, and Business teams to ensure flawless operational enforcement.

Salient features of the framework

- **Proportionality Principle –** It must be designed proportionate to the specific size, operational complexity, business model, and existing technological infrastructure of the respective financial institution.
- **Core Pillars-** The framework mandates that data architectures be anchored firmly on accountability, integrity, transparency, auditability, traceability, proportionality, and standardization.
- **Single Source of Truth (SSOT) -** REs are required to identify and establish a Single Source of Truth for all critical data elements, ensuring

all internal business verticals rely on a uniform, authoritative source of information.

- **Auditing Protocols -** Institutions must continuously assess their data systems and subject their data governance mechanisms to rigorous, periodic internal and external audits.
- **Third-Party Liability -** The RBI has tightened third-party sharing norms.
- Banks and NBFCs will now bear full responsibility for institutional and customer data shared with outsourced service providers or group entities.

Defining Data Roles & Accountability

- To solidify individual accountability, the guidelines require a dedicated data function to be led by a senior executive not below the rank of Chief General Manager (CGM) or its equivalent.

Role	Core Functional Responsibilities
Data Owners	Accountable for data definitions, quality classification, metadata management, and governance within their respective business domains.
Data Stewards	Responsible for supervising and driving the day-to-day implementation of the prescribed data governance standards across the organization.
Data Custodians	Tasked with technical controls, including data storage, user access, backups, business continuity, disaster recovery, and the secure disposal of stale data.

Reference

[Economic Times | RBI Data Governance Guidance Framework](#)