



PRACTICAL PROCUREMENT

Added Value Sourcing



SERIES 2 OF 9 · PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY CHAIN OUTLOOK 2026

AI Agent Governance Checklist

How to deploy autonomous procurement agents responsibly

A practical tool from the Practical Procurement resource library.

Use it standalone, or alongside the nine domains of the Collaborative Procurement Operating Model.

THE CHALLENGE

Autonomous AI agents are entering procurement operations — managing sourcing bids, generating quotes, and executing low-value purchase orders. They offer real advantages in speed and scale. But they also make mistakes. This checklist ensures your governance keeps pace with your automation.

KEY STAT

82% of businesses say AI risks are actively accelerating their governance modernisation timelines. 75% say AI exposes the limitations of legacy governance processes. (OneTrust 2025 AI-Ready Governance Report)

PHASE 1: BEFORE YOU DEPLOY

- 1 Confirm the task is suitable: repetitive, data-rich, rule-bound, and easily monitored.
- 2 Define the agent's scope boundary: exactly what data, systems, and decision types it can access.
- 3 Link agent actions to existing checkpoints: approved supplier lists, price thresholds, compliance standards.
- 4 Assign a human owner who is accountable for agent performance.
- 5 Set the human approval threshold: value or risk level above which the agent recommends but cannot decide.

PHASE 2: AT LAUNCH

- 1 Activate explainability dashboard: every action logged with rationale, timestamp, and outcome.
- 2 Confirm audit trail is capturing what the agent did, why, and what data it used.
- 3 Brief the team: ensure all stakeholders understand the agent's role and their override rights.
- 4 Run a parallel test period: compare agent decisions to human decisions for at least 2-4 weeks.
- 5 Document baseline KPIs: error rate, cycle time, cost outcome — to measure against going forward.

PHASE 3: ONGOING OVERSIGHT

- 1 Review agent KPI performance weekly for the first month, then monthly.
- 2 Compare agent decisions to human benchmark quarterly.
- 3 Audit a random sample of agent decisions monthly — look for oversimplification or bias.
- 4 Define and test your kill-switch: confirm you can pause the agent instantly if needed.
- 5 Assess scope annually: should the agent's authority expand, contract, or be retired?

GOVERNANCE HEALTH CHECK

Control element	Status
Defined scope boundary	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress
Human approval threshold set	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress
Explainability dashboard active	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress
Audit trail configured	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress
Kill-switch tested	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress
Accountable human owner named	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress
KPI review cadence established	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress
Stakeholder briefing completed	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress

KEY PRINCIPLE

In 2026, leadership will be measured not by how many tasks are automated, but by how wisely autonomy is allocated, tracked, and governed. The most successful leaders are slightly behind the fast movers — spending more time to be methodical before scaling.

Warwick Shaw

Practical Procurement®

Insights drawn from the GEP Procurement & Supply Chain Outlook Report 2026

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