

Leveraging Data for Health Care Innovation

15 Criteria for Prioritizing Data Projects

Both the data and the opportunities to innovate are extensive. But resources are not. So, how does a data-driven hospital or health system choose when and where to spend its data capital? Hospital and health system leaders need a formal system in place to evaluate and prioritize data projects. For example, they need a single, organized and standing multi-disciplinary committee or body that reviews, evaluates and prioritizes all data project requests. That committee or body would have an intake system for accepting data project proposals and established and agreed-upon criteria upon which to evaluate and prioritize them.

Criteria to consider:

- **How does the project support one or more strategic objectives of the organization?**
- **Does the project serve the patient first?**
- **Does the project optimize the workforce?**
- **What are we not doing to allow this project to flourish?**
- **What data sets are required to execute the project?**
- **What analytics are required to execute the project?**
- **What technologies are required to execute the project?**
- **What is the estimated cost of the project?**
- **What is the estimated return on investment?**
- **What is the organizational model (enterprise, departmental or hybrid)?**
- **Does the project adhere to the data-governance policy?**
- **What is the timetable?**
- **How soon do the users need the actionable information from the project?**
- **What is the potential impact of the project's outcomes?**
- **Does the project duplicate another data project?**

Making evaluation criteria and the data project queue transparent to all users internally fosters collaborative decision-making and problem-solving across the organization. There also needs to be a mechanism in the evaluation and prioritization system that allows an urgent or critical data project to jump the line, so to speak. A public health emergency like the COVID-19 outbreak would be an example. The hospital or health system could put other projects on hold to focus its data resources on successfully managing such an emergency. ●

