

Chief Audit Executives ranked the European Union's (EU) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as one of the top risks in The IIA Global Perspectives and Insights 2018.

Effective 25 May 2018, the GDPR affects all organisations that process personal data of EU residents, no matter where the organisation is located globally.



Working towards GDPR compliance can be:

 complex  costly  disruptive

Organisations need to invest time and resources to recalibrate systems and processes to tighten the protection of personal data to the security level required by regulation.

This new regulation imposes strong penalties for non-compliance and calls for the appointment of a data protection officer (DPO) with clear accountability and well established organisational roles and responsibilities, and processes related to the collection, use, and retention of data on individuals, including employees and vendors.



A proper governance structure and oversight is key to successfully managing GDPR compliance. It has to be a continuous process to effectively monitor and mitigate risks of non-compliance.



The internal audit (IA) function, by virtue of its deep departmental access, compliance and risk knowledge, plays a pivotal role in assessing and monitoring compliance, evaluating the compliance framework, and assessing resolution of data breaches and challenging management assumptions.

An alliance with the DPO helps to further improve robustness of the organisation's compliance framework.

To fully embed the compliance process within the organisation, IA also has a role to play in promoting a risk conscious and security aware culture by conducting awareness seminars, sharing of trips and traps and good practices.



Data is a valuable currency in the digital economy and the GDPR exercise should not be seen as one of solely checking boxes to avoid being fined. While compliance with GDPR requires significant effort, it exemplifies an organisation's commitment to data protection and the mitigation of cybersecurity risks.



Yours sincerely  
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