

FRAMEWORK ON ONE PAGE · VERSION 1.0

Agent Sprawl

Population diagnostic · August 2026

TIME TO USE 30 min review / 90 min workshop	AUDIENCE AI governance, IT, security, and business leaders	OUTPUT A reconciled agent population and response queue
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How many AI agents are currently operating in your environment, not the count that were formally approved, but the count that are actually running?

What it is

The IT team has a list of approved AI tools. The business units have a different count. The developers have built agents that appear in neither list. The citizen developers in Operations built automations in Copilot Studio that nobody in IT knows exist.

API sprawl describes uncontrolled growth in APIs, interfaces, and integration endpoints. Agent Sprawl describes growth in AI agents and the associated identities, permissions, tools, execution paths, owners, and operating scope the organization must govern.

The three tiers

TIER 1: Employee shadow AI	Individual employees use personal accounts, personal devices, or browser-based access to AI tools for work tasks without IT approval, organizational visibility, or any assessment of what organizational data is being processed.
TIER 2: Organizational procurement without central visibility	Business units independently adopt AI tools and vendors through department-level purchases, pilot programs that became permanent, or vendor integrations that bypassed central IT procurement.
TIER 3: Authorized agents with over-permissive operational scope	Agents were formally approved, correctly configured, and deployed with legitimate business authorization, but their operational permissions were never bounded to what their documented purpose actually requires.

A worked example

Situation	A generic enterprise is comparing its approved registry with agents discovered in tenant and business-unit records.
Where it lands	Population mismatch confirmed
Evidence	The approved registry lists twelve agents while discovery evidence identifies seventeen active deployments across three business units.
Gap found	Five deployments lack a named owner and governance record.
Next action	Reconcile the five records, classify each deployment, and establish a recurring population check.
Output	A current agent count with an assigned remediation queue.

The one action it produces

A reconciled agent population and response queue

What good looks like

The organization's agent registry reflects the actual count of AI agents operating in the environment, not just the count of formally approved ones. The Tenant Reconciliation Gap is declining quarter over quarter as the intake process matures. The Governance Readiness Matrix places the organization in the high count, high coverage quadrant because authorization coverage has kept pace with deployment velocity.

What it cannot establish

This object can reveal population mismatch and prioritize reconciliation. It cannot prove that an inventory is complete without independent discovery evidence.