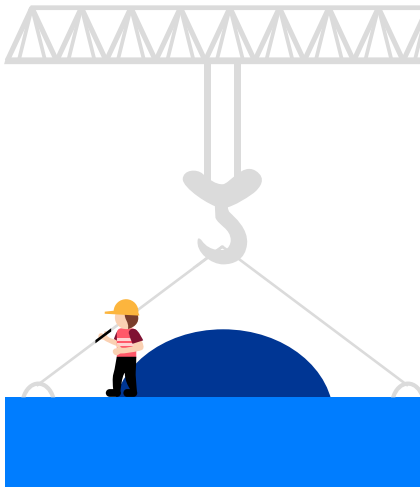
Achieving inclusive AI

Policy paper



Executive summary

Artificial intelligence (AI) holds immense potential to accelerate innovation, enhance productivity and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, its benefits risk being unevenly distributed unless collective action is taken to foster inclusive development and adoption.

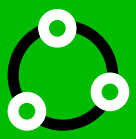
This paper presents the building blocks for inclusive AI: reliable infrastructure and energy, equitable access to data and computing power, digital skills, multilingual AI models, ethical policy frameworks, and a supportive regulatory environment.

It sets out the roles of both government and industry, and the resources needed to spread AI adoption. The paper emphasises the importance of local innovation ecosystems, inclusive workforce development, and enabling policies that support start-ups and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The global community can bridge the AI divide and drive sustainable, inclusive development through:

Inclusive access to energy, infrastructure, data, skills and locally relevant AI applications without resorting to protectionist or mandated approaches

Flexible and adaptable regulations that build public trust, and enable the widespread adoption of AI



Collaboration, public-private partnerships, investment and innovation friendly policies with the appropriate human rights, privacy, data protection, and security safeguards as a means to bridge the AI divide

Business has a critical role to play in advancing practical, market-driven solutions that empower all regions to fully participate in and benefit from the AI revolution. The industry case studies, available in the overarching narrative on AI[1] released by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), serve to illustrate some of these solutions that are already being implemented.

Working together with policymakers is crucial to support this effort and provide clarity and regulatory stability, while fostering consumer confidence, and empowering all regions to fully participate in and benefit from the AI revolution.

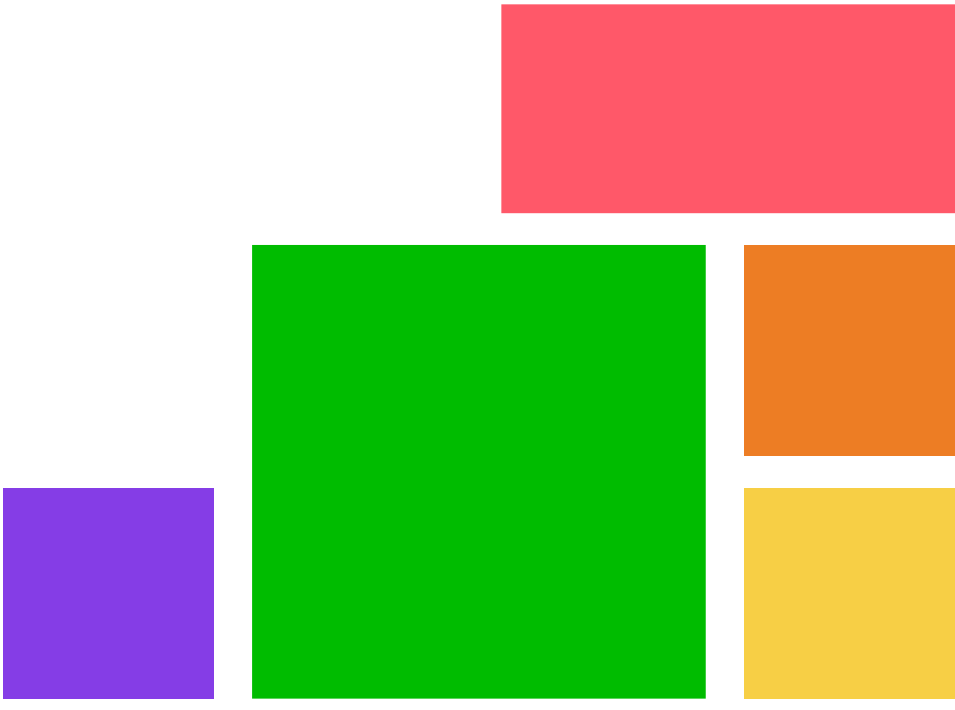
1 ICC, Overarching narrative on artificial intelligence (2024).

1. What we mean by inclusive AI and why it is important to achieve it

AI promises to drive innovation and boost productivity in every sector of the economy. It can also help tackle societal challenges and achieve the SDGs. The ability to discover new insights in large data sets will drive new frontiers in science, including advances in healthcare and supporting the sustainability solutions needed to address the climate crisis. Moreover, AI technologies can accelerate the spread of knowledge and opportunities, including through broadening access to quality education, and the use of AI-powered language translation tools to break down language barriers.

AI therefore has the potential for transformative impact, but these opportunities will not be realised automatically. While connectivity coverage extends to over 95% of the global population, approximately 33% (or an estimated 2.6 billion people) remain unconnected or under-connected[2], primarily due to barriers in usage rather than availability and this percentage rises to two-thirds of the population in Africa. This can lead to the uneven distribution of the benefits of AI, with many developing countries and underserved communities lacking the necessary infrastructure, data access, and skills to develop usage. It will require a concerted effort to ensure they are widely available, particularly to ensure developing countries and underserved communities, including the Global South, can reap the benefits of AI.

Efforts must focus on creating and sustaining an AI ecosystem that is not only creative and productive, but also inclusive and fair. This effort requires the participation of multiple stakeholders coordinating and collaborating to eliminate the digital divide, improve AI awareness, encourage local AI development, and implement regulatory oversight. These efforts will foster inclusive access to infrastructure, data and skills, as well as an enabling policy environment, to ensure that AI benefits everyone.



2 ITU, Measuring digital development: facts and figures 2023 (2023).

The building blocks of inclusive AI

Infrastructure and connectivity usage

There are a number of layers in the AI technology stack and a wide-ranging and fast-growing set of systems, software, and applications delivering value and benefits. But all of this depends upon electricity and connectivity, and without reliable energy and Internet access, communities risk being cut off from the transformative potential of AI. It therefore remains a priority to address the digital divide that still sees a third of the world not connecting to the Internet, rising to two-thirds of the population in Africa. Addressing this global digital divide will be essential if the Global South is to benefit from the promise of AI.

Data centres represent a crucial layer of the technology stack. These centres provide the immense computational power needed to train, build, and deploy advanced AI models. By housing millions of servers, data centres make vast computing resources accessible to organisations of all sizes and even to individuals. It is essential to invest in digital infrastructure globally, including in the Global South, to ensure equitable access to these powerful technologies.

Access to data and compute capacity

Access to compute and high-quality data remains a critical enabler for inclusive AI development. Yet, many regions, particularly in the Global South, face significant barriers in both areas. A healthy AI data ecosystem is one full of vast and varied data to analyse themes, patterns, and insights across large and diverse datasets to help develop AI models and AI applications, but data quality is not the same everywhere. Many developing regions do not have the necessary data infrastructure, thus, local businesses and researchers cannot build AI applications and solutions that are relevant to their local conditions.

Equally important is addressing disparities in data availability. Open innovation frameworks and open AI datasets should be made available for start-ups, micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), research entities and all marginalised populations to enhance the inclusiveness of AI models for all populations.

Skills

Beyond the need of basic digital and literacy skills, AI is changing jobs and the way people work, requiring that people master new skills to advance their careers. Countries will not be able to adopt AI at scale and capture its benefits without the skilled workers to use it. AI has the potential to democratise and personalise access to knowledge, but it will also create a pressing need for people to acquire new skills.

The first element to consider is the role of AI education and training, beginning in schools with AI literacy and skills development, and extending into universities and vocational training programmes to support workers in different sectors. Training programmes will be needed in various areas, including developing AI technical skills, supporting AI business transformation, and promoting safe and responsible AI development.

It is also important to think about the workforce transitions that will arise from the increased deployment of AI across different sectors of the economy. Automation and generative AI will make some tasks done by people redundant while creating new professional roles and opportunities, and the workforce will need to be equipped with new and different skills.

Local innovation

AI opens up many opportunities for innovation, with the potential for new companies and entirely new business categories, helping to create new forms of economic growth. It is important that AI models and development tools are broadly available to app developers around the world, so every nation can develop its own AI economy and ecosystems.

An important aspect of making AI systems more inclusive is ensuring they are multilingual. Many existing AI models are primarily developed in a limited number of widely spoken languages, which can reduce their accessibility and usefulness for speakers of other languages.

Ethical AI policy frameworks

The development and deployment of AI systems present novel ethical, legal, and societal challenges. To ensure AI is developed and used in ways that are fair, transparent, and inclusive, governments must establish and implement robust ethical policy frameworks. These frameworks should be grounded in internationally recognised principles that promote the trustworthy use of AI that respects human rights and democratic values, and are fit to adapt to national contexts and priorities.

Enabling policy environment

A supportive legal and regulatory environment is important for enabling AI inclusion. Governments can provide overall direction through the development of national AI strategies, which can include increasing public sector use of AI. Governments and the private sector can also look at how to leverage public-private partnerships. Policy frameworks need to ensure that AI systems adhere to key privacy principles.

Cybersecurity and trust are also foundational elements for the successful adoption of AI. Developing cybersecurity frameworks and strong data governance structures are important for ensuring a stable, protected digital ecosystem that will enable countries to participate in the digital economy and leverage data-driven innovation.

Cross-border data flows are important for companies to be able to provide access to AI-powered services and solutions across the globe as well as enabling collaborative scientific research.

Finally, it is important that intellectual property laws are applied to ensure that AI enables and empowers creators and innovators, not disenfranchises them.

Harmonised AI standards[3]

International standards are essential for fostering inclusive AI, as they provide clear, consistent guidelines for all participants in the AI supply chain, from developers to end-users. These standards ensure technical and regulatory interoperability, promoting responsible AI management practices and addressing broad principles defined in laws and regulations. By referencing standards in regulations, policymakers can facilitate the implementation of AI governance frameworks, thereby supporting the development of trustworthy AI systems.

Initiatives focused on expanding access to the Global South

An overriding goal for governments should be ensuring that everyone has the means to personally benefit from AI, and they should look to the private sector and multistakeholder approaches to bring to bear the necessary resources to advance inclusive AI across the world, including in the Global South.

3 ICC, AI governance and standards, Paper (2025).

2. The role and responsibilities of governments and business: Recommended policy approaches

The successful development and governance of inclusive AI requires coordinated action from all stakeholders, including government and business, to ensure that everyone can harness the benefits offered by AI technologies. Governments are crucial in establishing the regulatory frameworks and policies that ensure AI development is ethical, transparent, and accessible to all. However, to drive further progress, they need additional resources and support, particularly in areas such as capacity building, funding for research, and fostering international cooperation.

At the same time, industry drives innovation and inclusion through the development of diverse AI solutions. Many private sector initiatives, such as multi-company collaborations and individual efforts, are already working to address gaps in AI inclusion. To truly advance inclusive AI, there must be greater collaboration between governments and industry, particularly through public-private partnerships and international cooperation.

To further explore these dynamics, the following sections delve into the specific roles of governments and industry in advancing inclusive AI, highlighting key areas for action, collaboration, and addressing resource gaps.

Infrastructure investment

Energy resources and electricity infrastructure | Digital infrastructure and meaningful connectivity

It is important to consider not just the need for AI-ready data centres and computing infrastructure, but also the underlying infrastructure without which they cannot function.

Energy resources and electricity infrastructure

Access to stable and affordable electricity is a foundational requirement for inclusive AI development. As AI technologies become increasingly embedded in economic and social systems, reliable energy supply is essential to support the infrastructure that powers them. In many parts of the world, particularly in the Global South, technological advancement is hindered by energy insecurity.

Several factors will be critical to enabling all countries to fully participate in and benefit from the AI revolution:

- ensuring widespread access to clean and secure electricity, ensuring that countries have enough trained electricians,
- providing clear pathways to secure new energy connections for AI data centres in a timely manner, and
- efficient grid management and demand forecasting.

Separately, water is essential for data centre operations as it prevents the silicon chips—the basic building blocks of cloud and AI computing—from overheating. As data centres become central to global digital ecosystems, governments and industry must look for ways to reduce water use in data centres so as to support water conservation.

Forward-looking policy should encourage sustainable data centre design that integrates clean energy sources, reduces water usage, and drives innovation in precision cooling technologies such as chip-level or closed-loop systems. Next-generation infrastructure can demonstrate that technological progress and sustainability are not mutually exclusive. These approaches not only improve resource efficiency but also enable increased computing capacity in environmentally responsible ways. Additionally, AI can enable more efficient use of existing electric grids, expedited energy permitting and opportunities for innovation in the energy industry that can support economic and environmental efficiencies, and increase capacity to support not only AI infrastructure, but broader economic growth.

Support for research and development remains another critical enabler. Basic research, often driven by universities and public funding, fuels innovation in ways the private sector alone cannot. Governments should strengthen support for fundamental AI research and ensure public-private partnerships accelerate the safe deployment of AI technologies.

Digital infrastructure and meaningful connectivity

One of the most basic needs for inclusive AI development is ensuring that strong digital infrastructure, internet access, broadband, and cloud computing are readily available to drive AI enablement of communities and businesses.

Governments should invest in the expansion of broadband networks and should encourage the private sector through public-private partnerships to fast track the infrastructure development.

Policies that promote competition and innovation in the provision of connectivity services will help improve coverage, reduce costs, and enhance service quality, especially in underserved and rural areas.

Inclusive AI depends on more than just access, it requires meaningful connectivity. This involves addressing three layers of the digital ecosystem[4]: ensuring infrastructure and devices are accessible and affordable, supporting the development of relevant and localised applications and services, and equipping users with the digital literacy needed to effectively engage with these tools. Government strategies should support the creation and adoption of local digital content, including through e-government services that foster everyday engagement with technology. Further, investing in digital literacy and capacity-building initiatives, particularly for marginalised communities, is key to enabling broad participation in the digital economy and AI development.

4 ICC, White Paper on Delivering Universal, Meaningful Connectivity (2022)

Access to data and compute capacity

Governments should support the creation of high-quality data commons, shared data repositories that are responsibly governed and broadly accessible to researchers, start-ups, and organisations. These commons should prioritise the inclusion of diverse data sources representing different cultures, languages and social realities to ensure that AI systems reflect and serve all communities. Governments should also establish data-sharing frameworks that would allow the sharing of more sensitive datasets, while ensuring that privacy and security are maintained. Efforts to overcome missing or incomplete data can also be advanced through collaborative data stewardship models, shared standards and targeted investments in local data ecosystems.

For AI innovation to be inclusive and effective, broad and varied access to high-quality data is essential not only for large organisations, but also for researchers, start-ups, and public institutions. Expanding access to diverse datasets helps improve system performance, enhance safety and reduce bias across AI applications.

Data is foundational to building inclusive AI systems, yet access to it remains highly uneven. Governments have access to some of the largest sources of high-quality and high-volume data, but government agencies often lack the resources to make data available for AI training. In addition, public datasets are often fragmented across jurisdictions, collected by different agencies and institutions, and published in varying formats and timelines. This makes it difficult, costly and time-consuming to combine, and use these datasets in ways that serve the public interest. Making this knowledge available for AI training can advance the capabilities of AI models, driving innovation and discovery across sectors.

Governments have a vital role to play in addressing this data divide. They can improve coordination between agencies, invest in data interoperability and open standards, and support research initiatives that unlock and refine high-quality public data. They can also support and encourage non-profit, academic, and cultural institutions to make valuable data more discoverable, accessible, and usable through the establishment of open data commons. Such efforts should aim to increase not only the volume of accessible data, but also its diversity—ensuring that datasets reflect a wide range of cultures, languages, geographies and perspectives.

Skills

Promote AI education and training | Public awareness | Workforce transitions

Promote AI education and training

A major issue regarding the use of AI is the current digital skills gap in the world. Most economies have a shortage of skilled labour to develop, deploy and use AI. National AI education strategies should be implemented to integrate AI literacy in school curricula, universities and vocational training programmes. More workforce upskilling initiatives should be expanded, with a focus on youth, women and SMEs that are often unable to keep up with technological developments. Industry leaders and international organisations should also develop AI competency-based education frameworks to ensure that workers across various sectors can benefit from the AI economic transformation.

Public awareness

Public awareness is a critical pillar of inclusive and responsible AI governance. Public sentiment toward AI is marked by a tension between excitement and apprehension. A recent survey across 31 countries found that 52% of adults reported feeling nervous about AI products and services, while 54% expressed excitement[5]. This fear often overshadows the natural curiosity that typically accompanies new technologies and can act as a significant barrier to AI literacy.

To overcome this, it is essential to develop accessible and relatable educational campaigns that not only dispel myths but also directly address public concerns and stimulate informed curiosity. Governments have a unique opportunity to bring citizens into the AI conversation, boosting understanding, increasing trust, and ensuring that local voices shape policy decisions. Locally driven AI literacy initiatives tend to be more trusted and effective, particularly when tailored to diverse learning needs and cultural contexts. As AI technologies continue to evolve, public education efforts must also remain flexible and forward-looking, ensuring that people from all backgrounds are equipped to engage with AI confidently, and meaningfully.

Workforce transitions[6]

AI is reshaping the labour market, impacting job roles, tasks and the demand for skills across sectors. The OECD estimates that occupations at the highest risk of automation account for about 27% of total employment[7]. The private sector[8] plays a central role in equipping the workforce with the skills needed to harness the transformative potential of AI. By embedding AI training across disciplines and promoting inclusive access to learning opportunities, businesses can help create a more adaptable and productive workforce. Case studies[9] show how the private sector is leading efforts to foster continuous learning, often in partnership with educational institutions, to ensure training programmes respond to evolving technological and labour market demands.

Building a skilled and inclusive AI work also requires international cooperation. Governments should strengthen cross-border collaboration through knowledge sharing, joint training initiatives, and research and development (R&D) partnerships.

At the same time, investment in digital infrastructure, AI education and skills development particularly in underserved regions, is essential to build a skilled AI workforce and ensure the benefits of AI are shared broadly and equitably[10].

Despite challenges, the innovative, technological and regulatory developments of AI are mainly compatible with, and can even reinforce, privacy and personal data protection rules[11]. Developing comprehensive policies and regulatory frameworks that support human-centred AI development and use, including data protection and privacy laws, requires strong international co-operation and alignment with existing global principles and policy recommendations. Such principles are necessary to avoid fragmented and duplicative AI governance solutions, spanning multilateral and regional approaches[12].

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5 UNESCO, AI literacy and the new Digital Divide - A Global Call for Action (2024).
6 United Nations Office on Digital and Emerging Technologies (ODET), International Labor Organisation (ILO), Mind the AI Divide: Shaping a Global Perspective on the Future of Work (2024).
7 OECD, Using AI in the workplace (2024).
8 Business at OECD, Boosting Productivity and Business Growth: The Role of AI Skills (2025).
9 idem.
10 World Economic Forum (WEF), A Blueprint for Equity and Inclusion in Artificial Intelligence (2022).
11 OECD, AI, Data Governance & Privacy: Synergies and areas of international co-operation (June 2024).
12 ICC Overarching Narrative on AI (September 2024).

Proactive measures are also needed to support workers whose roles are evolving with the use of AI. Promoting social dialogue between governments and business, is essential to ensure that workforce transitions are inclusive, and fair. Public-private partnerships are also essential to encourage and deliver training, reskilling, and redeployment programmes for workers affected by AI. These initiatives should be co-developed with industry input to align with emerging skills demands, while also ensuring accessibility for workers in vulnerable sectors, including youth and women.

Women must be actively included in AI workforce strategies by addressing gender-specific barriers to participation in emerging AI-driven occupations. Governments should create enabling policy environments that allow industry to invest in targeted skilling and reskilling initiatives that respond to both technological and societal needs ensuring women are equipped to lead, innovate, and thrive in the digital economy.

With 70% of young workers[1] viewing generative AI as an opportunity to enhance their capabilities, supportive policies can help them thrive in evolving job markets.

Governments should also support SMEs, which make up over 90% of businesses and employ 50% of the global workforce[2]. Currently SMEs are being surpassed by large companies. Closing the SME adoption gap can yield substantial economic benefits for countries.

1 World Economic Forum (WEF), How young workers can thrive with AI when they have the right skills (June 2024).
2 AI and the Global Economy, LinkedIn (2025).

Local innovation

Linguistic inclusion | Start-up ecosystem

Linguistic inclusion

While many existing AI models are developed in a limited number of widely spoken languages, it is important to find ways to bridge the global language divide. Developers of large language models should ensure they are also contributing to the development of large language models for under-represented languages. It can be helpful to look for ways to partner with local partner organisations, but it will also require access to datasets in these under-represented languages, an issue covered above in the section on access to data.

Start-up ecosystem

Start-ups and small businesses play a critical role in shaping the future of artificial intelligence. To fully unlock their potential, governments must adopt policies that foster innovation, enable fair competition and lower barriers to enter the AI economy. Regulatory frameworks should be risk-based, proportional and focused on technology misuse, rather than creating burdens that disproportionately affect emerging companies. Policymakers should leverage a science and standards-based approach to regulation, that recognises that implementation should be enforced only if its benefits outweigh its costs, which can create unnecessary burdens to start-ups.

In addition to regulatory support, governments should review procurement practices to ensure start-ups have meaningful opportunities to offer services and compete in public sector AI deployments. Investment in digital literacy and workforce development is also essential, not only to grow a skilled talent pool for start-ups, but to support broader societal participation in an AI-driven economy.

Open access to AI models, both proprietary and open-source, must be safeguarded, allowing developers to freely choose and distribute the tools best suited to their needs. In particular, open-source AI models offer a foundation for innovation, peer review and adaptability, giving smaller actors a vital entry point to experiment, build, and compete. Governments should ensure that start-ups can easily access these data pools.

National strategies should prioritise homegrown AI innovation by identifying and supporting solutions that directly respond to local development challenges. Local AI innovation ecosystems must be supported to allow emerging economies and underrepresented communities to develop their own AI solutions. AI start-ups, MSMEs, research institutions and digital entrepreneurs should be provided with financial, and regulatory support by governments. The creation of regional AI hubs and agendas will also help academia, industry and government to collaborate and promote an environment for AI research and development. Also, more collaboration between countries should be encouraged to share knowledge, technologies and conduct joint research on responsible, and explainable AI to address local and global issues.

Ethical AI policy frameworks

The responsible stewardship of AI that is trustworthy, ethical and rights-respecting is essential to driving all of the vital objectives of AI inclusion. Aligning national strategies with existing governance models and resources can provide a comprehensive framework for ethical and sustainable AI governance, while avoiding fragmented and duplicative AI governance solutions and spanning multilateral and regional approaches. Notable frameworks include the OECD's 2019 AI Principles, revised in 2024 and endorsed by 47 countries[13]; UNESCO's 2021 Recommendations on the Ethics of AI[14]; the G7 Hiroshima AI Process[15]; the G20 Leaders Declaration[16]; and the UN General Assembly's Resolution on AI[17].

It is important to involve stakeholders in the development of overarching policy frameworks and national AI regulatory approaches. Given the role of the private sector and other stakeholders in developing AI technologies, policy approaches will be most successful where they can draw upon the perspectives and expertise of those responsible for the innovation. The OECD's AI Principles continue to be a vital guiding framework for OECD member states and beyond, partly because stakeholder representation is built into the OECD's policy processes. The OECD was also mandated by the G7 to create a reporting framework for companies to share how they are adhering to the G7 Hiroshima AI Code of Conduct for Organizations Developing Advanced AI Systems. This new voluntary reporting framework[18] is a valuable tool that supports transparency around efforts to advance safe, secure and trustworthy AI.

13 OECD AI Principles, (last update, 2024).
14 UNESCO, Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (last update, 2024).
15 G7 Leaders' Statement on the Hiroshima AI Process (2023).
16 G20 Rio de Janeiro Leaders' Declaration (2024).
17 UN General Assembly A/78/L.49 Resolution, Seizing the opportunities of safe, secure and trustworthy AI systems for sustainable development (2024).
18 G7 reporting framework (2025).

At the same time, industry and multistakeholder initiatives on AI policy and governance serve as valuable learning tools for policymakers and fellow industry stakeholders alike. These examples demonstrate the effectiveness of various approaches to addressing ethical, legal, and societal implications of AI technologies[19].

Enabling policy environment

National AI strategies | Public sector use of AI | Public-private partnerships | Privacy | Cybersecurity | Data flows | Intellectual property rights

National AI strategies

Governments have a vital role to play in shaping inclusive national AI strategies through targeted, sector-specific investment. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, sectoral strategies can align AI development with a country's economic strengths, cultural context and workforce capabilities. For instance, AI can support transformative outcomes in sectors such as healthcare (through diagnostics, personalised medicine, or health system management), education (through adaptive learning tools and multilingual resources), finance and manufacturing (through automation and robotics in local industries). In addition, governments can offer targeted incentives for AI start-ups and improving access to funding mechanisms.

Public sector use of AI

Governments should also lead by example in adopting AI within the public sector to increase efficiency, transparency and service accessibility. Governments that use AI can have more powerful predictive analytics that help them with important tasks such as external threat detection, health crises and financial issues like inflation. By understanding what is likely to happen quickly, governments can make smarter decisions that might minimise the effect of these issues[20].

Existing governance frameworks for interrelated public policy issues need to be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose, to enable the procurement and use of AI. Such policies including those addressing privacy, cybersecurity, procurement, data governance and data classification, and intellectual property rights.

Public-private partnerships[21]

Establishing digital innovation hubs in partnership with industry can also provide vital platforms for AI entrepreneurs to grow offering mentorship, training and access to key resources. At the same time, governments must invest in the foundational digital infrastructure needed to support AI, such as reliable electricity, broadband connectivity, data centres and cloud computing services.

19 ICC, Overarching narrative on artificial intelligence (2024).
20 IBM, AI in government (2024).
21 African Union, Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy, Harnessing AI for Africa's Development and Prosperity (2024).

Privacy

Generative AI raises data governance and privacy challenges, and divergent approaches in addressing those challenges can lead to regulatory complexity and enforcement challenges. To ensure trust and legal compliance, policy frameworks must require that AI systems adhere to key privacy principles, including lawfulness, fairness of processing, transparency, data minimisation, purpose limitation, and integrity and confidentiality. Implementing privacy-by-design methodologies from the outset of AI development is essential to safeguard individual rights.

Equally important is the security of AI systems throughout their lifecycle. Governments and organisations should ensure that AI models are developed and deployed with appropriate technical and organisational safeguards to prevent unauthorised access, manipulation, or misuse. This includes adopting measures proportionate to the level of risk and aligned with the specific needs and objectives of a government or organisation and informed by applicable national and international standards.

Traceability should also be a core component of generative AI frameworks. Documenting and tracking the decision-making processes of AI systems supports accountability, enables risk identification, and helps mitigate vulnerabilities from the design phase onwards. Strengthening policy in these areas will be critical to fostering responsible AI that respects privacy, protects individuals, promotes accountability and maintains system, and data integrity.

Supporting the implementation of global privacy guidelines and principles can contribute to the development of AI systems that are ethical, trustworthy, and respectful of individual rights.

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity and software security best practices are foundational enablers of inclusive and trustworthy AI. AI can also introduce new cybersecurity risks including data poisoning, model inversion, adversarial attacks, indirect prompt injection and operational differences associated with data management[22] that differ from traditional software vulnerabilities. To address these challenges, governments must adapt cybersecurity frameworks to reflect the specific threat landscape posed by AI systems.

Public and private actors must promote secure by design, and secure by default principles that clarify baseline security expectations across the AI supply chain, from data curation and model training to deployment and monitoring. Voluntary codes of practice, such as those developed by multistakeholder partnerships, can help establish baseline expectations for the secure development and use of AI, especially in high-risk contexts.

Strong international collaboration and global standards are vital in this effort. Such standards should be science-based, interoperable and risk-informed, ensuring that AI governance frameworks simultaneously promote innovation, rights, and resilience. Business has shown strong leadership in implementing AI principles and guidelines to address the safe, secure and transparent development and use of AI that provide a structured approach to safeguard these systems and enhance trust in their use.

At the same time, AI, and particularly generative AI, offers transformative potential as a force-multiplier for cybersecurity. AI-enabled tools can help security teams scale cyber defences and

22 UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), Policy Paper, Code of Practice for the Cyber Security of AI (2025).

defend against attacks at machine speed and scale. Using AI for cybersecurity defenders can help address existing challenges around talent, skills and capacity, offering particular promise for under-resourced institutions and countries, including in the Global South. Ensuring equitable access to these capabilities should be part of the broader effort to promote inclusive AI.

Data flows

Allowing data to flow between countries is vitally important for enabling the benefits of AI to flow across borders. This means establishing regional trusted data zones and adopting cloud-first policies to enhance cross-border broadband connectivity, data flows, and digital trade in order to leverage the computational power of AI.

Intellectual property rights

The rise of generative AI is raising complex questions about intellectual property (IP) frameworks, particularly around the widespread use of data scraping to collect training data. IP laws may vary across jurisdictions but it is important that they are applied in a manner that promotes both the public interest in robust innovation and the protection of the rights of creators, including through responsible AI practices. Tools such as a voluntary code of conduct and technical safeguards could help foster responsible data scraping practices and AI use that will enable innovation and support the protection of rights holders across the AI ecosystem[23].

Harmonised AI standards

To achieve a harmonised approach to AI standards, governments should raise awareness and actively involve businesses and experts in the development of international AI standards, ensuring these reflect both technological advancements and local market realities. Multistakeholder collaboration must be championed, with inclusive processes involving industry, academia, civil society, and policymakers to create balanced, widely adopted standards. Policymakers should also leverage and promote the use of existing international standards as reference points for AI regulation and voluntary business adoption. Governments should also integrate AI standards into public procurement requirements to drive broader industry adoption and reduce compliance complexity, particularly for SMEs.

23 OECD, Intellectual property issues in artificial intelligence trained on scraped data (2025).

Initiatives focused on expanding access to the Global South

It is vital that the advent of AI does not exacerbate global digital divides and that the benefits of AI are spread evenly across the world and throughout communities. This was captured well by the UN Global Digital Compact[24] (GDC), adopted in September 2024. The UN Global Digital Compact recognised "the immense potential of AI systems to accelerate progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals" and called for "international cooperation to support developing countries in building AI capacities". It also encouraged "the development of international partnerships on artificial intelligence capacity-building to develop education and training programmes, increase access to resources including open AI models and systems, open training data and compute, facilitate artificial intelligence model training and development, and promote the participation of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in the digital economy".

There are several government-led initiatives which hold promise in this area. The 2025 Paris AI Action Summit launched Current AI[25], an international foundation which aims to launch and support tangible projects that serve the public interest. It will focus on three key areas - data, openness and accountability of AI models - and is supported by an initial investment of €400 million over five years, supported by ten countries including Chile, Finland, France, Germany, India, Kenya and Nigeria.

Another example is the Artificial Intelligence for Development (AI4D) programme[26] that aims to foster safe, inclusive and responsible AI ecosystems that empower people and accelerate progress on challenges in international development. Supported by the Canadian, Swedish and UK governments, it works in Africa and Asia to enable experts in developing countries to develop their own solutions to development challenges and mitigate AI risks through safe, inclusive, rights-based and sustainable AI applications and policies.

There are also various multistakeholder and private-sector-led initiatives, such as those from the ICC overarching narrative on AI[27].

24 UN, Global Digital Compact (2024).
25 Current AI (2025)
26 Artificial Intelligence for Development (AI4D) Programme.
27 ICC, Overarching narrative on artificial intelligence (2024).

3. Conclusion

To deliver the even distribution of the benefits of AI, including in developing and underserved countries, policymakers should:

Invest in foundational infrastructure such as clean energy, broadband connectivity, and sustainable data centres

Expand access to high-quality, interoperable public data

Ensure inclusive digital education and workforce training across all levels

Adopt national strategies that align with international ethical frameworks

Promote homegrown innovation, including linguistic inclusion and support for local AI ecosystems

Integrate AI standards into public procurement

Update regulatory systems, particularly around data governance, privacy, and cybersecurity

Finally, governments must lead international cooperation on AI capacity-building, ensuring that developing countries can meaningfully participate in and benefit from the AI revolution.

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About the International Chamber of Commerce

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) is the institutional representative of more than 45 million companies in over 170 countries. ICC's core mission is to make business work for everyone, every day, everywhere. Through a unique mix of advocacy, solutions and standard setting, we promote international trade, responsible business conduct and a global approach to regulation, in addition to providing market-leading dispute resolution services. Our members include many of the world's leading companies, SMEs, business associations and local chambers of commerce.

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