State of AI Policy in Africa 2025

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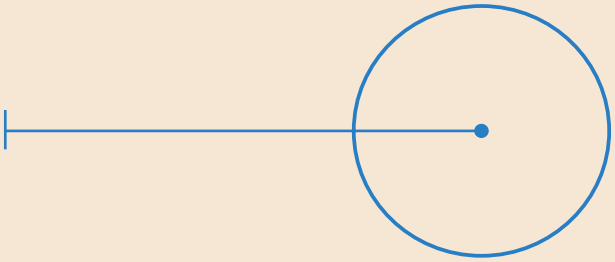
Executive summary



This report assesses the state of artificial intelligence (AI) policy across twenty African countries as of October 2025. It asks: how far have governments moved from strategy documents to real implementation? Using a twelve-point rubric, we measure each country's progress across policy design and delivery, including institutional setup, funding, legal and ethical grounding, monitoring, and external engagement.

The findings show a clear divide between ambition and execution. Over half the reviewed countries have published or drafted national AI strategies, but only a fraction have attached budgets, laws, or monitoring frameworks.

Egypt and Ethiopia score highest, both having strong institutional anchors and visible pilot projects. Kenya follows closely, driven by a $1.1 billion budget and major foreign investment. Others, like Ghana, Senegal, and Nigeria, show momentum but lack enforceable laws and measurable oversight. Countries such as Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana are still building foundational readiness.

Across regions, four patterns emerge:

- **Weak funding models.** Only a few governments have dedicated, multi-year AI budgets; most depend on donor support or general ICT allocations that are easily diverted.
- **Limited monitoring and evaluation.** Most strategies lack indicators or reporting systems to track progress.
- **Gaps in law and enforcement.** While 35 African countries have data protection laws, few have AI-specific regulations or regulators with technical capacity to audit algorithms.
- **Ethics without accountability.** Many governments include ethics language in policy documents, but rarely translate it into binding rules or institutional practice.

The result is uneven progress: ambitious frameworks without the institutional or financial backbone to sustain them. Many strategies remain invisible to the public, with limited consultation or published updates, reducing transparency and accountability.

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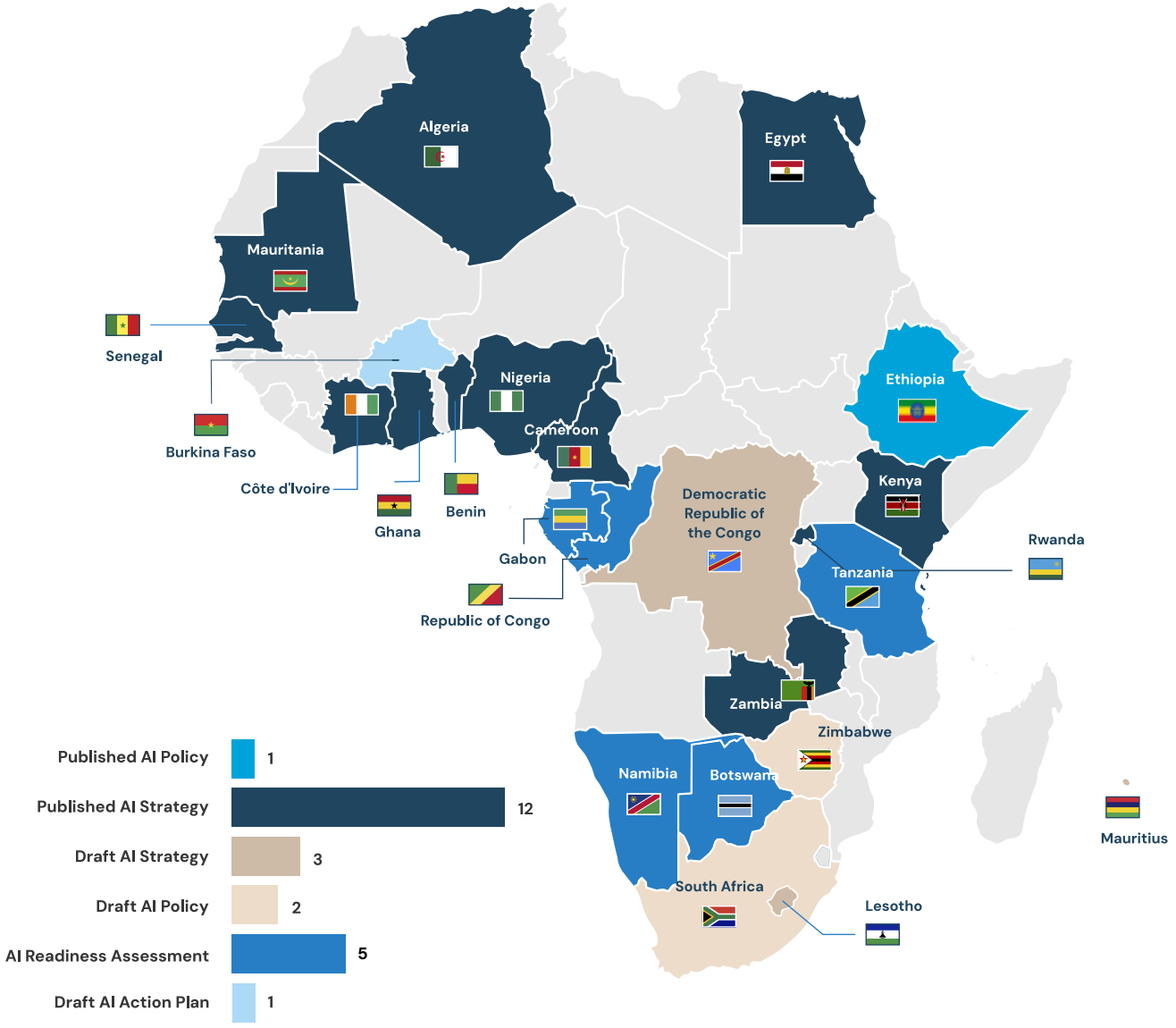

The importance of AI to Africa

Artificial intelligence is reshaping economies worldwide, and for Africa, it presents both an opportunity and a test of leadership. With a young population, high unemployment, and ongoing industrial diversification, AI can accelerate productivity, improve governance, and open new markets.

AI-driven tools can already be seen transforming agriculture, healthcare, education, and financial inclusion. Farmers use predictive models to forecast yields and manage pests; health workers apply diagnostic algorithms to expand care in under-resourced regions; and fintech startups use AI to extend credit to unbanked populations. Governments are also experimenting with AI in e-governance—using it for court automation, data-driven service delivery, and public accountability.

Globally, AI has become a driver of power and influence. Countries that shape the technology also shape the rules. Africa's participation in this new landscape is essential to ensure its needs and perspectives are represented in emerging global norms. By building local capacity and contributing to international debates, African states can assert agency rather than remain passive recipients of imported technologies.

Yet AI's risks are serious. Without strong governance, it can deepen inequality, embed bias, or be used for surveillance and censorship. Ethical, rights-based frameworks are therefore not optional—they are the foundation of sustainable adoption.

For Africa, AI is not just a technological question. It is an economic and governance issue: about who builds the systems, who benefits from them, and who sets the terms of accountability.

Methodology and evaluation rubric

The AI Governance Maturity Index evaluates national readiness through twelve criteria, grouped under four dimensions of policy performance:

1. **Policy design** – whether a country has a finalized AI strategy, its level of specificity, and institutional anchoring.
2. **Implementation capacity** – whether budgets exist, participation is broad, and projects are underway.
3. **Governance and accountability** – the presence of legal frameworks, ethics integration, and monitoring mechanisms.
4. **External engagement** – how actively countries collaborate regionally, internationally, and through foreign AI investment.

Each country is scored across these criteria, producing a total out of 24. The index does not attempt to capture every project or nuance but offers a comparable baseline for how African countries are turning AI ambition into action.

Key insights

- **Egypt** and **Ethiopia** lead in overall maturity, combining national councils, measurable milestones, and growing investments. Both link AI policy to development goals and institutional continuity.
- **Kenya** and **Senegal** stand out for scale and financing—Kenya for its billion-dollar budget and Senegal for its costed rollout plan. However, both lack strong legal enforcement and public monitoring.
- **Mauritius, South Africa,** and **Ghana** show policy continuity, active consultation, and visible projects but remain weak on legal codification and M&E systems.
- **Nigeria** demonstrates strong participation and implementation through local language models and scaling hubs but lacks dedicated funding and statutory backing.
- **Zambia** shows how smaller economies can still achieve meaningful progress through institutional focus and early rollout.
- **Namibia, Botswana,** and **Zimbabwe** are still in the drafting stage, where discussions remain largely conceptual and fragmented across ministries. These countries are conducting readiness assessments, forming task forces, or drafting strategy outlines but have yet to publish full national frameworks. Progress at this stage often depends on donor partnerships or university-led consultations rather than government-funded initiatives, leaving timelines uncertain.

- About 34 other countries like **Chad, Eswatini (Swaziland), Sierra Leone,** and **the Central African Republic,** have not yet released any AI-related policy or roadmap. Public records show little to no government-led initiatives or official consultations on AI, though a few have shown early interest through digital economy or ICT frameworks. For these nations, the starting point will likely be establishing a baseline understanding of AI's relevance and coordinating regional support to avoid isolation from continental efforts.

Across all cases, transparency, monitoring, and legal enforcement remain the weakest links. Too many strategies are unpublished or inaccessible, consultations go undocumented, updates are rare, and few policies have clear legal backing or accountability mechanisms. This limits citizen trust, weakens oversight, and slows regional learning.

The path forward

Africa's AI journey has begun, but progress will depend on narrowing the gap between ambition and delivery. That means:

- Embedding AI strategies in law, not just policy.
- Building strong public institutions and ethics frameworks that extend beyond ministries to universities and civil society.
- Creating regional and continental funding mechanisms to sustain investments.
- Making monitoring public so progress can be independently verified.

As the recommendations section of this report shows, the next phase is less about drafting new strategies and more about implementation, evaluation, and collaboration. The countries that treat AI as a public good—not a private experiment—will shape the continent's technological and economic future.

In short, Africa is not behind—it is early. The task now is to make ambition durable: to move from promise to proof.

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Country analyses

State of AI Policy in Africa 2025

Egypt AI policy evaluation

Egypt has one of the more developed AI strategies on the continent. The country published the second edition of its National AI Strategy (2025–2030), updating the first version from 2020. The document sets out four pillars: AI for government, AI for development, capacity building, and international relations. Oversight is handled by the National Council for Artificial Intelligence (NCAI).

Where the plan falls short is funding. It lays out a roadmap with projects and goals but doesn't spell out budget lines, merely suggesting financing sources. By contrast, participation has been broad—ministries, outside experts, and companies all had a say, and there are ongoing consultations and workshops around AI readiness.

For example, the School of Computing at The Knowledge Hub Universities (TKH) hosted a kickoff event for the AI Caravan in February 2025, a six-month initiative dedicated to enhancing AI awareness and expertise across Egypt.

Implementation is underway. In July 2025, Egypt marked a major milestone when it graduated 1,300 new AI trainees, and the country has partnered with companies such as IBM and Huawei on AI projects.

Egypt's AI strategy also comes with a monitoring system—KPIs linked to one-, three-, and five-year milestones—so there is at least some structure for tracking progress. But on the legal side, the picture is thinner. Egypt has launched a Center for Responsible AI and promised a regulatory framework, but there is no binding AI law yet. Still, the ethics framing is strong, explicitly tied to OECD principles and focused on rights, fairness, and safety.

Regionally, Egypt is aiming for a leadership role. It chaired the AU AI Working Group and hosted the 2024 Global Dialogue on AI Governance. In October 2024, UNDP Egypt hosted an interactive workshop to promote AI for sustainable development in Africa.

Globally, Egypt plans to host the first AI Everything Middle East & Africa summit and exhibition in February 2026, bringing together experts from more than 60 countries.

In July 2025, it convened stakeholders from academia, government, NGOs, and international organisations to explore how AI can transform health systems in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

These moves, plus major foreign investment—like a new $15m Tier-III data center backed by Africa50, a €1.8bn hyperscale facility in the New Administrative Capital, and a $300m semiconductor and AI fund—give Egypt's AI strategy weight beyond the document itself.

Overall, Egypt scores high because it combines detailed planning, strong institutional backing, and real investment. The weak spots are the lack of clear budgets and enforceable laws.

Total score: 20/24

Ethiopia AI policy evaluation

Ethiopia formally adopted its National AI Policy in June 2024, making it one of the few African countries with a government-approved framework. The policy outlines how AI should support sectors like healthcare, agriculture, education, and public administration.

At the center of this push is the Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute (EAII). Reporting directly to the Prime Minister, the EAII is tasked with developing AI tools tailored to local needs, from breast cancer detection systems to natural language processing for Ethiopian languages.

Funding is another area where Ethiopia stands out. In July 2025, the federal budget allocated 1.13 billion Birr (roughly USD 7.7 million) to EAII, a 42% increase over the prior year. Few African governments have set aside such direct AI funding.

This helps explain the visible rollout from an AI-powered "Smart Court" system being tested in the judiciary, to the cancer detection tool mentioned earlier, and many other applications in finance, health, and agriculture.

Public participation in drafting the policy was visible, with evidence of structured consultation with civil society or academia. Ethiopian government ministers attended an AI enablement workshop in July 2024, while UNESCO hosted a workshop on AI in education in July 2025.

However, monitoring and evaluation are weakly defined. While the broader Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy mentions tracking progress, the AI policy itself doesn't lay out clear KPIs or reporting systems. On the legal side, Ethiopia has some supporting laws, like the Personal Data Protection Proclamation, but no AI-specific legislation.

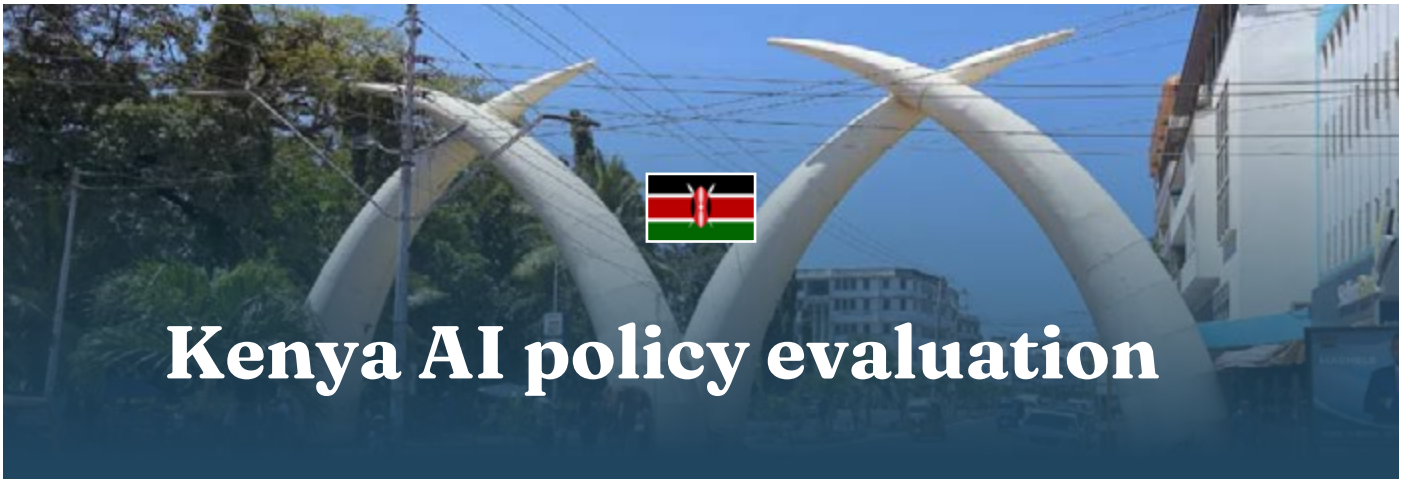
Ethical framing is present—official wording stresses ethics, inclusion, and self-reliance—but without binding, rights-based provisions, it earns only a partial score.

Regionally and globally, Ethiopia has positioned itself as an active voice. It hosted the AI for Africa Forum and Ethio Tech Expo 2025, co-chaired AU-level dialogues, and is supporting the building of a continental AI hub with 13 other countries. International partnerships are also expanding, with collaborations with Russia and Slovenia announced.

Foreign investment is arriving, too. The country plans to establish a $250 million bitcoin mining and AI data center, led by BitCluster, a Russian bitcoin mining company. The IFC-backed Raxio Group is bringing $100m worth of data centers to Ethiopia and other African countries, while Safaricom and its partners have built a $100m facility for telecom and mobile money—assets that also support AI.

Overall, Ethiopia scores high due to strong funding, political backing, and visible rollout, but gaps remain in monitoring systems and binding AI laws.

Total score: 20/24



Kenya AI policy evaluation

Kenya launched its National Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2025–2030 in March 2025. The strategy outlines use cases in healthcare, farming, education, security, and government services.

Oversight is led by the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy (MICDE), supported by technical working groups across commerce and media.

The government committed KSh 152 billion (about $1.1bn) to implement the plan by 2030, mainly for infrastructure—one of the largest AI budgets in Africa. Consultations have been broad. The American Corner in Nairobi hosted an AI Summit featuring top experts, and over 200 educators met in Nairobi in June 2025 to discuss AI in education. Mount Kenya University (MKU) also held a workshop in July 2025 to develop its institutional AI strategy.

Implementation has begun. 3,000 youths are being trained through Google.org, a Centre of Competence for public service delivery is in progress, and the UK–Kenya AI Challenge Fund is advancing safe and inclusive AI

Weaknesses remain in monitoring and legislation. The strategy mentions governance but lacks clear reporting mechanisms. The AI Bill remains in draft, leaving no enforceable laws.

Ethics are addressed through principles of inclusion and fairness but without binding rules. Still, Kenya's framework aligns with the African Union's digital strategy.

Kenya has also hosted UNESCO-backed discussions and partnered with the DAAD and UNDP. In 2024, the Ministry of Defence co-hosted a workshop on responsible military AI with the Netherlands and South Korea. In 2025, Kenya hosted the Africa Artificial Intelligence Policy and Innovation Conference (AIPAC) in Mombasa.

Foreign investment remains a key strength. Microsoft and UAE-based G42 pledged $1 billion in 2024, including a geothermal-powered data center supporting a new Azure cloud region.

Overall, Kenya's strategy is strong on funding, partnerships, and investment attraction but weak on monitoring, enforcement, and ethics implementation.

Total score: 19/24

Mauritius AI policy evaluation

Mauritius was one of the first African countries to publish a national AI strategy back in 2018, and in July 2025 it launched the development of a new, updated plan. This continuity shows long-term political commitment, but the update is still in progress.

The strategy is becoming more concrete. It now ties into the country's Digital Transformation Blueprint for 2025–2029 and targets practical use cases in finance, tourism, agriculture, and higher education. The government has even issued guidelines on AI in universities, reflecting a sector-by-sector approach rather than broad ambition only.

Institutional leadership has improved since the first strategy. A Mauritius Artificial Intelligence Council (MAIC) was proposed in 2018, and now a new AI Unit is being set up under the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation. This gives the policy a clear home and signals accountability.

Money has also been put behind AI. The 2025–2026 budget allocates Rs 25 million for a Public Sector AI Programme and introduces a tax deduction of up to Rs 150,000 on AI investments for startups and MSMEs. These measures are relatively small compared to Kenya or Egypt, but they are specific and targeted.

Public participation has been good. In July 2025 the government held a consultation that brought together business, academia, civil society, and other ministries. Requests for input on the new policy are also ongoing, keeping the process inclusive.

And implementation is starting to move past pilots. Budget documents show plans for AI tools in public services like labour and education. The government also announced an AI Innovation Start-Up Programme, while regulators like the FSC are partnering with local research councils to apply AI in financial services.

Monitoring and evaluation remain underdeveloped. Earlier documents mention measuring the socio-economic impact of AI, but there's no evidence yet of a detailed framework or reporting cycle. On the legal side, Mauritius has one specific law—the Financial Services (Robotic and Artificial Intelligence Enabled Advisory Services) Rules 2021—but this applies only to investment services, not AI more broadly.

Ethics and rights are acknowledged in principle. The government is working on guidelines to address issues like bias in healthcare, but binding, rights-based laws aren't in place.

Regionally and globally, Mauritius is active. It hosted a UNESCO-backed AI summit in May 2024 and is positioning itself as an innovation hub. A regulatory sandbox has attracted $100 million in investments from tech giants, fostering 30 AI startups.

Mauritius is steadily strengthening its AI governance, but budget scale, monitoring, and legal frameworks are still catching up.

Total score: 19/24

South Africa AI policy evaluation

South Africa released its draft National AI Policy Framework in October 2024. It sets out twelve pillars including governance, ethics, safety, and explainability. The Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) leads implementation, supported by an AI Ministerial Advisory Council and the Artificial Intelligence Institute of South Africa.

Although the framework remains a draft, South Africa has invested heavily. Through the Foundational Digital Capabilities Research (FDCR) platform and the Centre for Artificial Intelligence Research (CAIR), government allocated R98.5 million in 2025/26 as part of a R484 million plan to build digital capabilities.

Public participation has been strong. The framework was released for public comment, following a 2023 discussion document. AI workshops were hosted by the South African Cultural Observatory in December 2024, North-West University in March 2025, and ArcelorMittal in August 2025. The National AI Stakeholder Forum was launched in August 2025 to coordinate national dialogue.

Implementation includes AI hubs at universities, AI-driven fraud detection and smart policing, and a planned digital visa system. AI is also transforming banking, healthcare, and languages.

The framework commits to monitoring and ethics but lacks measurable indicators or binding laws. No dedicated AI legislation yet exists, though regulation is planned. Ethical guidance follows UNESCO and OECD principles on fairness and transparency.

As G20 President (2024–2025), South Africa has advanced discussions on AI governance and digital infrastructure. Major events include the Pan-African Parliament Training Workshop, AI Expo Africa, AI Summit Series, and SACAIR. Microsoft pledged R5.4 billion for AI expansion, while MTN partnered with Huawei and China Telecom on 5G and AI services.

Overall, South Africa performs well on participation, funding, and leadership but falls short on enforceable laws and monitoring.

Total score: 19/24

Senegal AI policy evaluation

Senegal published its National AI Strategy (SNIA) in 2023, outlining 56 actions across four areas: human capital, governance, ecosystems, and sovereignty. Oversight lies with the Ministry of Digital Transformation (MCTN) and a planned Steering Committee involving other ministries such as economy, finance, and higher education. This links AI directly to Senegal's wider development system (BOS/PSE).

Funding is a major strength. The rollout is costed at 26 billion CFA francs (about $46 million) for 2024–2028, mostly for research, innovation, and entrepreneurship, with smaller allocations for training and institutions like the AI Campus. Few African plans include such explicit costing.

Public input has been limited. Experts were consulted through UNESCO's AI Readiness Assessment, but citizen participation was minimal. In 2025, the national assembly held a digital policy training for MPs, and Senegalese experts have led sessions on AI in research and education.

Implementation has begun through the "New Technology Deal" initiative, which includes an AI & Digital Factory and health pilots such as AI4PEP and AI for language learning. However, wider cross-sector rollout remains slow.

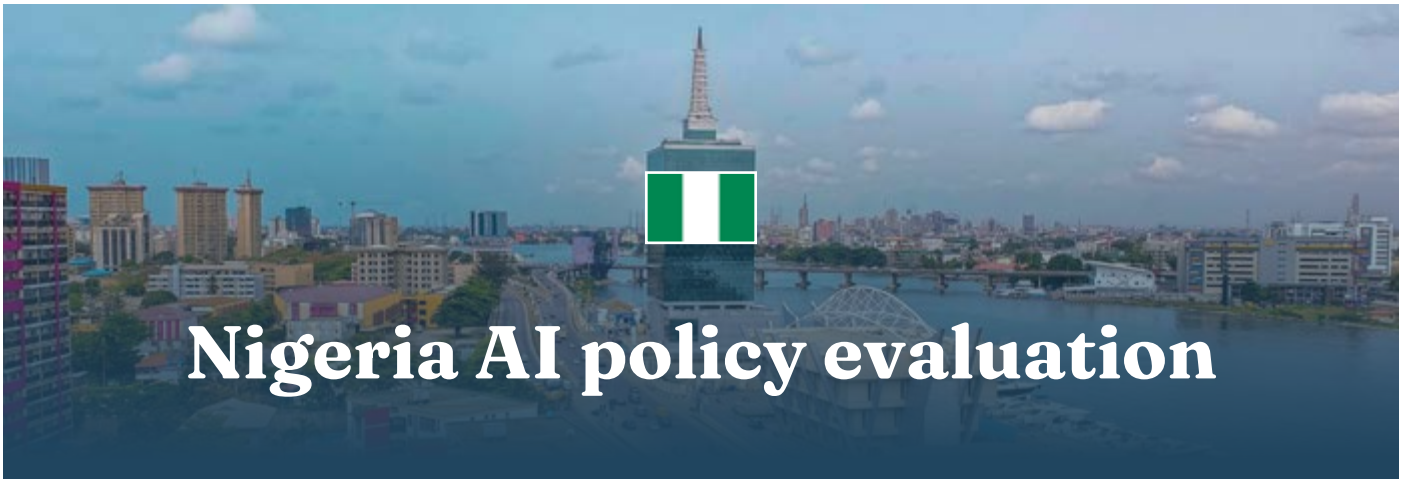
The strategy defines oversight through the Ministry and inter-ministerial committee but lacks a detailed monitoring framework with clear indicators or timelines. Legal gaps persist: no AI-specific law exists, and while ethics and responsibility are emphasized, there are no binding protections or enforcement mechanisms.

Regionally, Senegal is active. It hosted Deep Learning Indaba 2024, signed inclusive AI declarations, and contributed to ECOWAS AI policy debates in July 2025. Internationally, Senegal showcased its AI solutions at VivaTech 2023 and previously hosted AFRICATEK 2019.

Investment prospects are strong. Discussions include Meta-backed initiatives around a sub-regional AI computing hub and a new PAIX Data Centre in Dakar, backed by Africa50 and the EU.

Senegal's AI strategy excels in costing, planning integration, and institutional setup but is weakened by slow implementation, limited participation, and missing enforcement mechanisms.

Total score: 18/24



Nigeria AI policy evaluation

Nigeria published its draft National Artificial Intelligence Strategy (NAIS) in 2024, building on earlier policy work from 2022. The framework rests on five pillars: infrastructure, ecosystem, adoption, responsible AI, and governance. Oversight lies with the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation & Digital Economy (FMCIDE) and the National Centre for Artificial Intelligence & Robotics (NCAIR).

Funding remains the weakest area. The strategy lacks explicit budget lines or projections, relying on external partners. UNDP, UNESCO, Meta, Google, and Microsoft jointly provided US$3.5 million in 2024 for initial rollout.

Public participation has been extensive. Stakeholders from academia, civil society, and industry contributed through a four-day workshop in April 2024. Broader input came via online consultation, with follow-up training sessions by UNESCO for civil servants in early 2025. States including Edo, Sokoto, and Imo have hosted local AI workshops to advance adoption.

Implementation progress is tangible. Nigeria launched its multilingual language model, N-ATLAS, in 2025, supporting Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo. The government also established an AI Scaling Hub with the Gates Foundation to expand AI use in health, education, and agriculture. AI is already applied in social welfare to map urban poverty.

Monitoring and evaluation are mentioned in the NAIS but lack a formal framework. The strategy also has no binding legislation; it remains a policy rather than law. Ethical guidance centers on inclusion, accountability, and decoloniality, with a proposed AI Ethics Expert Group but no enforcement mechanism. Nigeria also endorsed the AU's continental AI framework and hosts major regional events like GITEX Africa and the ICAIR Conference.

Foreign-backed infrastructure is expanding rapidly. Key investments include Rack Centre's US$120m data centre, OADC's US$240m hyperscale facility, Google's N100m AI Fund, and Microsoft's US$1m local investment. Meta and the Gates Foundation are also supporting AI hubs and talent development.

Overall, Nigeria shows strong participation, early implementation, and significant foreign investment, but lacks clear budgeting, enforceable laws, and a measurable monitoring framework.

Total score: 18/24

Zambia AI policy evaluation

Zambia launched its National AI Strategy for 2024–2026 in November 2024, making it one of the few African countries with a published, standalone document focused entirely on AI. The strategy sets out pillars on policy and regulation, human capital, infrastructure, and research and innovation. Oversight is assigned to the Ministry of Technology and Science, with a proposed National AI Council to guide governance. The Smart Zambia Institute and an emerging technologies centre of excellence are meant to handle adoption and R&D, giving the strategy a solid institutional base.

Money has been earmarked, though at a modest level compared to larger economies. The Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy allocated K8 million (US$335,000) for regulatory frameworks, training, and awareness—covering part of AI's rollout. While not a comprehensive budget for the full strategy, it signals dedicated resources.

Public participation has been visible. The government mentions collaborators like the Tony Blair Institute and local experts, and there's evidence of broad consultation with civil society or public forums. For example, Zambia's national assembly held a two-day AI workshop in Lusaka in November 2024, and hosted a National Generative AI in Education Policy Drafting Workshop in Kabwe in July 2025.

Still, implementation is already visible. Universities are integrating generative AI into teaching, digital skills programs are being rolled out, and civil service training now includes AI components.

On monitoring and evaluation, the AI Council is expected to provide oversight, and the ICT policy includes an implementation matrix with indicators. Legal translation is ongoing: Parliament has debated AI regulation, but no binding laws have been passed yet.

The strategy makes a point of balancing innovation with rights. It commits to "responsible AI" and aligns with UN principles on human rights and AI. But since these remain principles rather than enforceable laws, the ethics score is limited.

Regionally, Zambia has tied its approach to the African Union's AI agenda and is active in continental discussions. For example, Zambian representatives took part in a 2024 high-level dialogue on AI in higher education in Africa. Internationally, Zambia has engaged with the UN on AI policy.

On investment, Zambia has been successful. A Silicon Valley company, Devdraft AI, announced a $10 million investment in Lusaka to build an AI payments platform and share expertise with universities. Google also plans to open an AI hub at the University of Zambia, and the World Bank has provided $120 million in digital transformation support.

Overall, Zambia performs well with a clear strategy, institutional base, and early implementation, but limited funding, lack of binding laws, and modest scale keep it below top performers.

Total score: 18/24

Ghana AI policy evaluation

Ghana's National AI Strategy (2023–2033) provides a 10-year roadmap to build an inclusive and responsible AI ecosystem. It envisions AI as a growth engine for innovation, productivity, and public service delivery. It identifies eight pillars: research, infrastructure, governance, data, talent, innovation, ethics, and partnerships. These pillars are tied to priority sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education, finance, and public administration.

The Ministry of Communications and Digitalisation leads implementation through the Office of the Head of Civil Service and the National Information Technology Agency (NITA). A dedicated Responsible AI Office is planned to coordinate standards, ethics, and cross-sector deployment. Funding remains limited. The strategy presents timelines but lacks a financing framework, making it reliant on donor and private support.

Participation was a key strength. Consultations included ministries, academia, private sector, and civil society. Regional dialogues were hosted at KNUST. The IndabaX Conference and Practitioners' Guide workshop in 2025 advanced capacity building and awareness.

Implementation is underway. Ghana is applying AI in health through telemedicine and vaccine logistics (Zipline, mPharma), agriculture via precision farming, finance through fraud detection, and public service through digital governance. New institutions like AI Africa Labs and Google's Accra AI centre are building local talent pipelines.

Monitoring remains weak. While KPIs are mentioned, there's no clear reporting structure or public evaluation system. Ghana also lacks AI-specific legislation. The Data Protection Act provides some coverage, but the AI framework is still non-binding. Ethical principles focus on inclusion and responsibility without enforcement mechanisms.

Regionally, Ghana aligns with Smart Africa's AI for Africa Blueprint and partners like GIZ FAIR Forward and The Future Society. International activity includes UNESCO, the British High Commission, and UNDP bootcamps. Ghana's minister also attended the 2025 WSIS and AI for Good Summit in Geneva.

Foreign investment is robust. Google's AI Research Centre anchors Ghana's ecosystem. Other major projects include a US$37m AI community centre, a US$100m agricultural hub, and a UAE partnership to establish an AI and tech hub.

Overall, Ghana performs strongly in participation, implementation, and investment but remains weak in funding, monitoring, and legal enforcement.

Total score: 17/24

Rwanda AI policy evaluation

Rwanda launched its National AI Policy in 2023, putting itself among the early movers on the continent. The document outlines clear strategic pillars and identifies priority use cases in health, agriculture, and education.

Institutional leadership is also well defined: the Ministry of ICT and Innovation (MINICT) is the lead, with a planned Responsible AI Office to drive rollout. The Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) and the Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA) have supporting roles.

Money is where Rwanda's plan looks thinner. While the government has talked about needing $76.5 million over five years, there's no national budget line specifically carved out for AI. Instead, the approach depends on a mix of projected ecosystem growth and future funding.

Rwanda's policy was reportedly built through multi-stakeholder consultations, with plans to set up an annual public forum for citizens, academia, and industry to keep feeding into AI policy discussions. However, evidence of this has been scarce.

Implementation is underway through multiple pilots. AI is being introduced into schools through curriculum pilots and teacher training, and the health sector is experimenting with AI-driven diagnostics. These early pilots are promising.

The weak spot is monitoring. The policy makes a passing mention of a monitoring and evaluation framework, without concrete details or structures. Legal grounding is also still missing. Rwanda has a Data Protection and Privacy Law from 2021 and plans for AI sandboxes, but no binding AI-specific laws have been passed yet.

On ethics, Rwanda fares better. The policy dedicates space to an "Ethical Commitment and International Alignment," and future national guidelines are in the works. Rights and safeguards are emphasized, but not yet codified.

Where Rwanda shines is in continental and international engagement. In April 2025, it hosted the Global AI Summit on Africa with over 90 countries represented. It also signed cooperation deals with the UAE and Malaysia on AI governance and will host the ISO Annual Meeting in October 2025, which will include focus on AI practices. These moves show Rwanda punching above its weight globally.

Foreign investment is present but moderate. The Gates Foundation pledged $7.5 million to launch an AI Scaling Hub, and Zimbabwean businessman Strive Masiyiwa's Cassava Technologies has announced plans for a data center in Kigali in partnership with Nvidia — but nothing concrete yet.

Overall, Rwanda stands out for clear strategy, strong institutions, and global engagement, but limited funding, weak monitoring, and lack of binding laws hold back its progress.

Total score: 16/24

Lesotho AI policy evaluation

Lesotho is still at the draft stage with its national AI framework, with the current document a second draft. It details AI applications in health, education, agriculture, and governance. Institutional responsibility falls under the Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MICSTI).

Lesotho doesn't provide AI-only budget lines in the draft, but its 2025/26 budget set aside M381.1 million for ICT, explicitly naming AI policy implementation as one of the uses. While not a dedicated AI pot, it's a step toward real funding.

Participation is a strength. The draft emphasizes a "whole of society" approach, including media, civil society, and citizens, not just government and business. Reports confirm public consultations and messaging around inclusivity, and Lesotho hosted the Digital Innovators Summit (DIS) 2025 held in Maseru under the theme: "Empowering Truth in the Age of AI" in September 2025.

Implementation has been slower. Lesotho discussed a partnership with Ghana in August 2025 to apply AI to agriculture, and controversially experimented with generative AI back in February 2024, but nothing else concrete has been announced publicly.

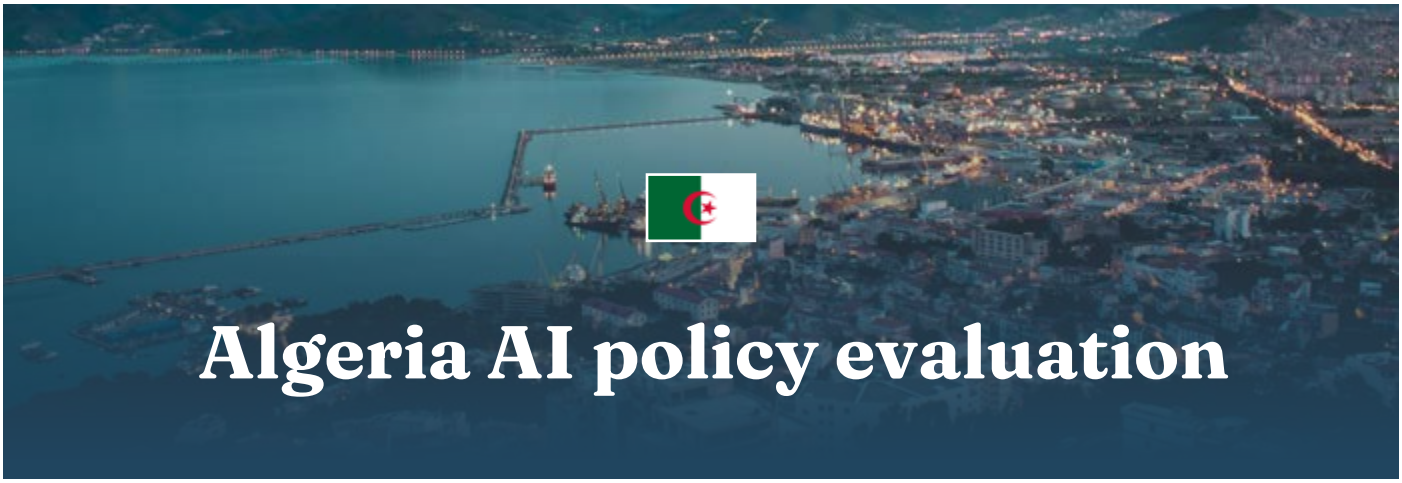
The draft includes a monitoring and evaluation framework, with clear inputs, outputs, and timelines. But legally, Lesotho lags. While broader ICT and data protection laws exist, there's no AI-specific legislation yet. Similarly, the draft mentions the need for ethical commitments—human rights, fairness, non-discrimination, low bias—but as with other countries, these are general principles and statements of intent rather than enforceable rules.

Where Lesotho punches above its weight is in continental and international engagement. It is partnering with Ghana, joining Smart Africa working groups, sending youth to global AI summits, and participating in ministerial roundtables. These moves show active positioning in the African and global AI community.

As with funding, another gap is foreign investment. While the African Development Bank is putting $331 million into Lesotho's digital infrastructure through 2030, there's no evidence yet of direct AI-focused foreign investment like data centers or labs.

Overall, Lesotho shows promise with an inclusive draft framework, ICT funding, and active international engagement. Slow implementation, lack of dedicated AI investment, and absence of binding laws keep progress limited.

Total score: 16/24



Algeria AI policy evaluation

Algeria formally adopted its National Artificial Intelligence Strategy in December 2024. The AI Council, created in June 2023, coordinates policy through the ministries of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and Knowledge Economy, Start-ups, and Micro-Enterprises.

The strategy outlines six pillars covering research, skills, infrastructure, ecosystem development, regulation, and applications in key sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and energy.

Funding includes Algérie Télécom's US$11m AI Investment Fund and a proposed national AI fund to support startups and public–private projects. A national venture studio launched in June 2025, backed by over $600 million in capital, aims to incubate 1,000 deep-tech startups prioritizing AI.

Participation is largely expert-driven. The National AI Conference and specialist consultations indicate openness to collaboration, but citizen involvement remains limited.

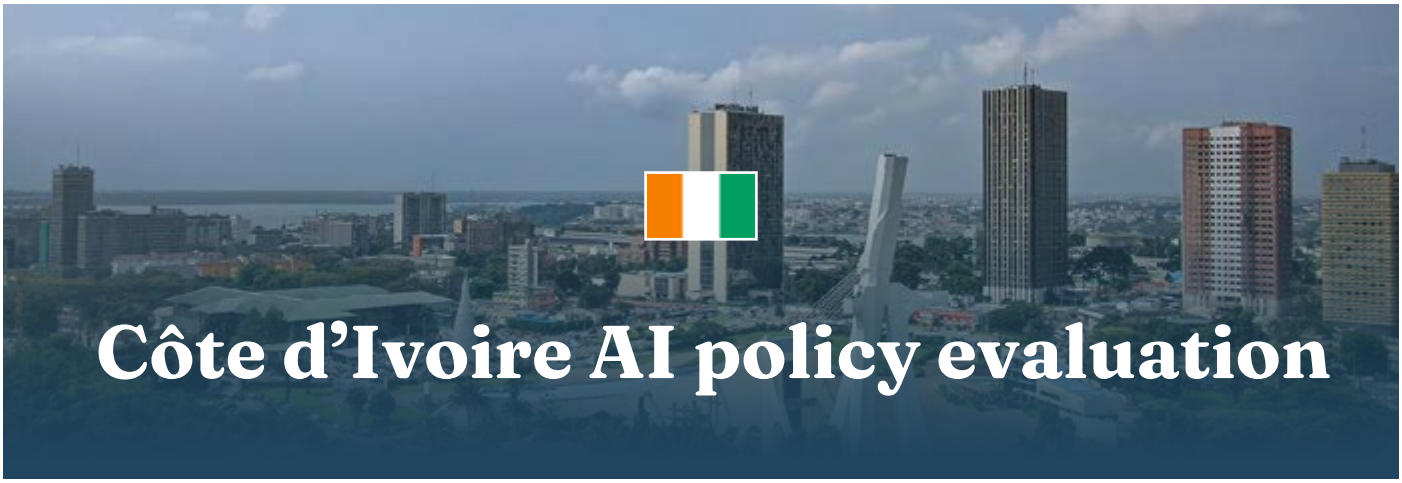
Implementation is advancing through the National School of Artificial Intelligence (ENSIA) and applied AI projects in student placement and urban planning. Local researchers developed Hadretna, a multilingual large language model supporting Daridja and Tamazight, to enhance access to local-language data.

Monitoring remains underdeveloped. The Council's mandate includes regulation and coordination, but there is no public reporting system or independent oversight. Algeria has yet to pass AI-specific legislation, relying instead on the 2018 data protection law. Ethical principles, such as safe and responsible AI, are referenced but not detailed.

Algeria has shown leadership regionally. It hosted a March 2025 ministerial summit with 26 African states and welcomed President Kagame to ENSIA in June 2025. The country also hosted the AI for Africa Conference in 2023.

Internationally, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune visited an AI innovation centre in Slovenia in May 2025, followed by a presentation by Slovenian AI researcher Marko Grobelnik at the Connected Algeria conference. Overall, Algeria has a defined strategy, an active AI Council, and visible progress in education and research. However, public participation, monitoring, and enforceable legal or ethical frameworks remain limited.

Total score: 16/24.



Côte d'Ivoire AI policy evaluation

Côte d'Ivoire officially entered the AI policy space in March 2025 with the launch of its National Artificial Intelligence Strategy (SNIA), presented by Prime Minister Robert Beugré Mambé. The strategy runs to 2030 and is framed as a dedicated, standalone roadmap rather than a sub-section of a broader ICT policy.

The SNIA rests on three pillars—investment, inclusion, and governance—and translates those into concrete measures. Examples include creating a national AI hub with an incubator, certifying AI solutions through a "Safe AI" label, and focusing on applications in health, agriculture, and education.

Institutionally, Côte d'Ivoire's strategy calls for a National AI Agency and a National Committee for AI and Data Governance. Together, these bodies are expected to coordinate implementation, oversee projects, and evaluate impacts.

The policy gets vague on budgeting. The strategy includes costed projects and a phase total ('134,000'), plus defined financing tools (AI startup fund, PPP, R&D tax credits, duty exemptions, sovereign fund). What's missing is a full multi-year appropriation with currency units and line-item sources across all phases.

On participation, Côte d'Ivoire fares better. In April 2024, the Telecommunications/ICT Regulatory Authority of Côte d'Ivoire (ARTCI) launched a national consultation involving consumers, businesses, civil society, and government actors. Further collaboration with UNICEF and IDinsight shows parliament and outside partners were engaged.

Implementation is at an early stage. In 2025, Côte d'Ivoire signed MoUs with UAE's G42 Presight and other firms to support training programs and digitalization projects. These actions signal intent, though not at scale or in any binding way.

The SNIA includes a roadmap, a change management plan, and monitoring mechanisms, but the operational details remain high-level. Côte d'Ivoire has not yet enacted AI-specific legislation.

Ethics are addressed: governance is one of the core pillars, and the strategy commits to "responsible growth" with inclusion and rights protections. But until there is a binding framework, this remains a stated intent.

Regionally, Côte d'Ivoire is active within Smart Africa and has tied its work to AU priorities. Internationally, it has taken part in forums like the Paris Summit for Action on AI.

The September 2024 unveiling of the national strategy brought together key digital sector players, including the International Council on Artificial Intelligence (CONIIA). There is still no major confirmed foreign AI infrastructure investment as of writing.

Overall, Côte d'Ivoire has a formal strategy with clear pillars, institutional structures, and broad consultations, but vague budgeting, missing implementation, and the absence of binding laws limit its current impact.

Total score: 15/24.

Mauritania AI policy evaluation

Mauritania has drafted a National Artificial Intelligence Strategy for 2024–2029, but as of October 2025, the strategy has not been formally adopted or passed through parliament. The draft sets out five priorities, 12 objectives, and 30 concrete measures. These include sector-specific applications in health, education, agriculture, and even defense.

Institutionally, the strategy is anchored in the Ministry of Digital Transformation, Innovation and Modernization of Administration. Oversight is coordinated by a sub-committee under the Supreme Council for Digitalization, with space for academia and the private sector. This setup provides a clear line of responsibility, although how it will function in practice remains to be seen. The strategy's weakest point is financing. While it calls for "sustainable financing mechanisms," no budget lines or allocations have been published as of writing. In contrast to peers like Benin, which at least put cost estimates on paper, Mauritania's AI ambitions currently lack financial grounding.

On public participation, the draft was posted online for consultation, and a 2025 workshop on AI and the rule of law brought in legal experts and policymakers. A separate April 2025 workshop on information integrity brought together government and regulatory representatives, journalists, lawmakers, researchers and civil society experts—part of the agenda was the intersection of artificial intelligence with journalism. The country has also held virtual workshops with local entities such as RIM-AI.

Early implementation steps are visible but limited. The country inaugurated the Nouakchott Data Hub in May 2025, a €15 million Tier-III data centre co-funded by the EU and European Investment Bank. This facility provides the kind of backbone infrastructure needed for AI research and applications, but it is more of a digital sovereignty project than a direct AI deployment. Mauritania's strategy draft touches on ethics and rights, promising alignment with data protection and human rights principles, but it lacks operational detail. There is also no AI-specific law, though the country has a personal data protection law on paper.

Internationally, Mauritania is beginning to show activity. Mauritania hosted its first international conference on artificial intelligence in April 2024, organized by the Faculty of Science and Technology of the University of Nouakchott. It also hosted the Nouakchott International Summit on AI in May 2025 with ALECSO, and signed agreements to strengthen local computing capacity.

In September 2025, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the government of Mauritania, and Kitsoft, a Ukrainian team, held a five-day workshop attended by over thirty representatives from the Justice, Transport, Finance, and Digital Transformation ministries. The workshop resulted in an e-government MVP being built.

Overall, Mauritania has a clear draft strategy with defined priorities, institutional anchors, and some public consultation, but the lack of formal adoption, absent budget lines, and limited implementation weaken its position.

Total score: 14/24.

Benin AI policy evaluation

Benin was among the first West African countries to approve a formal AI strategy. Its National Artificial Intelligence and Big Data Strategy (SNIAM) for 2023–2027 was adopted by the Council of Ministers in January 2023.

The plan sets four programs and 123 actions across five years, focusing on education, agriculture, health, and governance. Examples include AI-driven teaching tools and digital trade platforms.

Oversight lies with the Ministry of Digital Affairs and Digitalization, supported by cross-sector partnerships that will test coordination capacity. The SNIAM's estimated budget is 4.68 billion CFA francs (about $8.3m) to be mobilized through national funding, PPPs, and donor aid, though integration into the national budget remains unclear.

The strategy's preparation was inclusive. Authorities cite consultations with civil society, academia, and the private sector. Engagement events such as the Salon de l'Entrepreneuriat Numérique et de l'Intelligence Artificielle (SENIA) in 2022 and 2023, the Benin Workshop on Artificial Intelligence (BWAI), and the Summer School on Artificial Intelligence (EEIA) built awareness and community capacity.

Implementation is at an early stage. While Benin advanced broader digital projects like the customs AI platform, most of the 123 SNIAM actions remain in planning. Progress includes a 2025 collaboration with Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire to launch a Fon language voice-to-voice AI model to address linguistic inclusion.

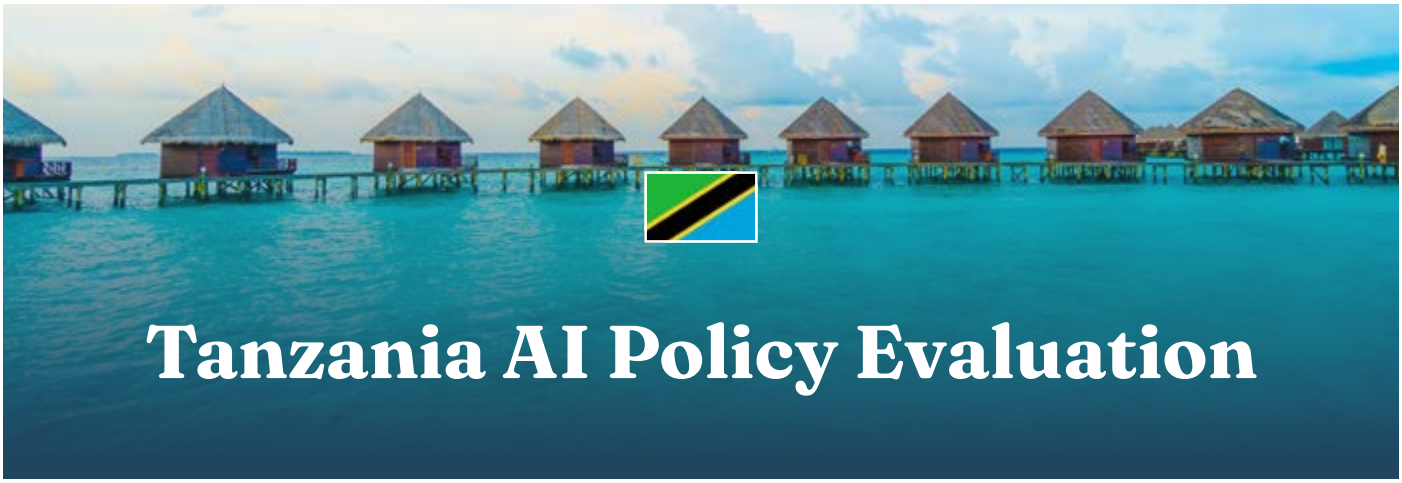
Monitoring is specified within the SNIAM, with performance indicators such as AI integration in education. However, no public monitoring reports are yet available.

Ethical and legal aspects are minimal. The strategy references oversight principles but lacks a formal ethics or rights framework, and no AI-specific law exists. It connects instead to Benin's broader Code of Digital Affairs.

Regionally, Benin promotes dialogue through SENIA and the BENIN.AI platform. Partnerships have also been explored with Canadian representatives. No confirmed AI-specific foreign investment has been announced, though global tech companies show continental interest.

Overall, Benin combines an early, costed strategy and inclusive participation with slow implementation, limited ethical and legal depth, and low foreign investment.

Total score: 13/24.



Tanzania AI Policy Evaluation

Tanzania is in the preparatory stage of its artificial intelligence journey. The government has completed a UNESCO-supported AI Readiness Assessment and is finalizing its National AI Strategy. Although not yet adopted, a public draft signals commitment and policy momentum. The total score stands at 10/24, reflecting progress with strong ethical grounding but limited institutional and financial depth.

The draft strategy aims to build a sustainable, inclusive AI ecosystem. It draws on ongoing efforts such as the National Digital Education Guidelines for AI, judicial automation, and pilot projects in health and agriculture—showing a shift from digital transformation to applied AI use.

The Ministry of Information, Communication and Information Technology (MICIT) leads both the readiness assessment and strategy drafting, providing administrative clarity but lacking a specialized AI agency for coordination.

While there is no dedicated AI budget, related investments underpin readiness. In FY 2024/25, nearly half of MICIT's budget went to expanding the National ICT Broadband Backbone, with TZS 24.85 billion for the Digital Tanzania Project. The 2025/26 Health budget also funds AI-based systems, though without a sustained AI financing framework.

Public participation has extended beyond the initial UNESCO consultations. The Tanzania ICT Commission, under the MICIT, now hosts the Tanzania AI Forum, an annual multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaboration on AI policy and ethics. Implementation remains at pilot level—examples include AI-powered court transcription via Almawave, applied research at the AI4D Lab (University of Dodoma), and small-scale projects in diagnostics and precision farming.

There is no monitoring or evaluation framework yet, and no AI-specific law beyond the existing Data Protection Act. Ethics remain a strong point: the draft strategy and AI Ethical Use Guidelines align with UNESCO's standards on fairness and transparency, though they are not enforceable.

Regionally, Tanzania hosted the Africa Internet Governance Forum 2025, endorsing the Africa AI Declaration, while internationally it engages partners like UNESCO, UNFCCC, and Almawave. Foreign investment is modest but notable—Almawave's localization of the Velvet Swahili LLM marks an early success in linguistic AI.

Overall, Tanzania demonstrates clear intent and ethical leadership in AI policy. With formal adoption of the strategy, a defined budget, and monitoring mechanisms, it is well positioned to advance from planning to coordinated implementation.

Total score: 13/24

Cameroon AI policy evaluation

Cameroon launched its National Artificial Intelligence Strategy (SNIA) in July 2025, outlining a long-term vision to 2040. The document is not yet public, limiting independent review, but available summaries suggest seven pillars covering governance, infrastructure, skills, ethics, and sectoral innovation in agriculture, health, and education.

The plan aims to create 12,000 jobs, train 60,000 AI professionals, and develop a sovereign large language model, "GPT Cameroon."

Oversight will come from a Presidential Council on AI and a new AI Authority. Reports indicate a public–private model led by ST Digital, which will co-manage implementation via its Douala data centre. This arrangement supports infrastructure development but raises questions about data sovereignty and governance independence.

Financing remains uncertain. Cameroon's 2025 national budget lists no AI-specific funding. Government statements mention public–private financing, but no figures or allocations have been published. Without a dedicated fund, implementation may depend on bilateral and donor support.

Public participation has been notable. The National Consultations on AI (CONIA) gathered academia, civil society, and tech firms. Separately, the Cameroon AI Policy Institute hosted various workshops throughout 2025. Besides summits supported by UNESCO, Cameroon has hosted consultations on artificial intelligence in partnership with UNDP through the Cameroon Accelerator Lab. There are also plans for a Central African AI network.

Early implementation is visible in pilot programs. The University of Buea's AI4PEP team has researched AI applications in healthcare, while national training programmes target indigenous groups and youth. AI tools are also being integrated into English-language education, as well as in aviation procurement through the Equip4Safety platform.

Monitoring and ethics remain under development. The SNIA mentions accountability, sovereignty, and sustainability but lacks enforcement mechanisms or published metrics. Draft proposals for AI legislation have been announced but not introduced to parliament. Cameroon currently relies on its general digital code and data frameworks.

No major AI-specific investments have been confirmed, though ICT and data-centre projects continue. Regional cooperation and training initiatives are expanding, but domestic capacity remains limited.
Overall, Cameroon's AI policy demonstrates ambition and growing coordination across institutions, but unclear funding, weak monitoring, and limited transparency may slow progress.

Total score: 12/24.

Namibia AI policy evaluation

Namibia has not yet published a national AI strategy, but it took a major step forward by launching its AI Readiness Assessment Report in August 2025. The report, produced by the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) with support from UNESCO, identifies the country's gaps and opportunities and lays the groundwork for a future national AI strategy. The report highlights sectoral opportunities for AI in health, education, agriculture, mining, water, and climate change.

Institutionally, the NCRST has taken the lead, working with the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture. The report also proposes creating a National AI Council and a Responsible AI Institute to guide future implementation, though these bodies remain only recommendations. Without a formal anchor, Namibia's AI governance remains transitional.

Funding is a clear gap. The report calls for greater R&D investment and infrastructure spending, but no budget has been allocated to AI specifically. Namibia's current digital and research budgets, such as the N$73.5 million (US$4.2 million) earmarked for e-governance, remain general rather than AI-focused.

Where Namibia stands out is in participation. The readiness process used UNESCO's methodology, which requires multi-stakeholder input. More than 100 actors—from government, academia, private sector, and civil society—were surveyed or consulted through workshops.

Early implementation is visible in pilot projects across robotics, banking, and citizen support. These steps move the agenda beyond assessment and are already delivering results: in December 2024, The Namibian reported that the Bank of Namibia has saved N$7 million (US$400,000) by streamlining processes using AI. On ethics, Namibia leans heavily on UNESCO's human-rights framing. The report explicitly positions AI as people-centered and responsible, aligning with the UN standard. For monitoring and evaluation, the readiness report is a baseline, but no ongoing M&E system yet exists. Similarly, there is no specific legal backing yet, though Namibia has general data protection and cybersecurity measures in the works.

Regionally, the readiness exercise aligns with the African Union's Continental AI Strategy, placing Namibia inside continental debates. AfroTech Namibia is another such example. Internationally, Namibia has carved out a presence in AI forums and partnerships. Foreign investment is however absent, with no new externally-funded AI labs, data centers, or compute projects announced as of writing, though a local data center is in the works.

Overall, Namibia has built momentum with a readiness report, broad participation, and early pilots, but without a formal strategy, budget, or legal framework, progress remains preliminary.

Total score: 11/24.

Burkina Faso AI policy evaluation

Burkina Faso is still at the drafting stage of its AI journey. The government is working on its first National AI Action Plan covering 2026–2028, having discussed AI at the country's legislative assembly. As of October 2025, no official strategy exists.

The plan under development revolves around six focus areas: infrastructure, data governance, human capital, ethics and law, innovation, and international partnerships. It also aims to address context-specific issues such as improving public administration and applying AI in sectors like agriculture and health.

Institutionally, the country has moved to establish an anchor. The Ministry of Digital Transition leads, supported by the Permanent Secretariat for Innovation and Monitoring of Emerging Digital Technologies (SPIVTEN).

Where Burkina Faso lags is in financing, as there is no AI-specific budget yet. While the country has attracted a $150 million World Bank loan for digital transformation and invested $30 million in infrastructure, these are general digital projects, not ring-fenced for AI. Without earmarked resources, the AI plan risks being sidelined.

Public input has been sought through workshops with broad stakeholder consultation. Early implementation is visible in small pilot projects, like the country's interest in AI-powered customs reform and local-language initiatives to make digital tools more accessible. These are promising, but they remain early, isolated steps rather than a coordinated rollout.

SPIVTEN is meant to publish a bulletin tracking AI-related activities, which hints at a culture of oversight. But until the Action Plan is finalized and SPIVTEN reports are availed publicly, it all remains speculative.

On ethics, the ministry has made clear commitments: AI must be inclusive, ethical, and rights-respecting. Legal frameworks exist for data protection and processing (2021) and cybersecurity (2024), but not for AI specifically.

Burkina Faso is engaging regionally. It hosted a West African workshop on AI ethics in 2024 and participates in UNESCO's project on AI and the rule of law. However, international engagement outside Africa is thin, and there is no evidence yet of foreign AI investment flowing into the country.

Overall, Burkina Faso is laying the groundwork with a draft plan, institutional anchors, and some early pilots, but the absence of a formal strategy, dedicated funding, and foreign investment keeps progress limited.

Total score: 10/24.

Zimbabwe AI policy evaluation

Zimbabwe is on the cusp of formalizing its national AI strategy but hasn't quite crossed the finish line. A National AI Readiness Assessment Report exists, and by mid-2025 the government had already produced a second draft of its AI policy, with public statements promising official launch by October 2025. As of writing, though, no final document is publicly available. This keeps Zimbabwe at the "draft stage," even if it's a very advanced one.

The policy's intent is clear: integrate AI into sectors like healthcare, education, agriculture, and governance, tied to the broader Smart Zimbabwe 2030 Master Plan. While still aspirational, this sectoral focus shows the country is moving beyond generic digital rhetoric toward more targeted AI applications.

Institutional arrangements are ongoing. The Ministry of ICT, Postal, and Courier Services is leading sectoral initiatives, including AI, with calls for a new Zimbabwe Artificial Intelligence Regulatory Authority (ZAIRA) and a multi-stakeholder AI Committee.

Zimbabwe has shown inclusive participation in designing its AI strategy. The readiness report was built through wide consultations, involving private firms, civil society, academia, and government ministries; and was discussed at a public summit.

The plan's weaknesses emerge when it comes to money and delivery. There is no AI-specific budget in Zimbabwe's 2025 financial plan, despite broader ICT allocations and the specific mention of artificial intelligence. Without earmarked funds, policy ambitions risk stalling at launch.

Implementation is still nascent. Pilot projects are emerging—such as AI-supported maternal health initiatives—but a full-scale rollout remains pending. There is little evidence yet of a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Legal coverage is patchy. Zimbabwe enacted a new Cyber and Data Protection Act in 2021, offering some foundations for AI-related governance, but there is no AI-specific law yet. Ethics and rights are acknowledged—especially through Zimbabwe's involvement in UNESCO's AI ethics pilots—but again, these are broad commitments rather than enforceable frameworks.

Regionally, Zimbabwe has aligned with the AU's Continental AI Strategy and taken part in forums like the AI Summit in Victoria Falls. International engagement is ongoing, with a three-day workshop in Harare hosted in June 2025, funded by the Wellcome Trust and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

And despite high-profile announcements by local players—such as Cassava Technologies' Nvidia deal announced by Zimbabwean billionaire Strive Masiyiwa—no significant foreign AI investment has landed in Zimbabwe yet.

Overall, Zimbabwe has an advanced draft strategy with clear intent and inclusive participation, but the absence of dedicated funding, weak implementation, and lack of binding laws or investment leave it stalled at the draft stage.

Total score: 9/24.

Gabon AI policy evaluation

Gabon is advancing toward an artificial intelligence framework but remains in the formative stage. Although a national AI strategy has not yet been published, the UNESCO-supported Readiness Assessment (RAM) and follow-up workshops have laid the groundwork, with an operational calendar now guiding its development under the broader "Gabon Digital" agenda.

Institutional responsibility lies with the Ministry of Digital Economy, Digitalization, and Innovation (MENDI). In 2023, Gabon created the National Technical Committee for Artificial Intelligence (CTN-IA) to coordinate national actions and established the Gabonese Innovation Center (CGI) as an AI acceleration hub. A planned National Council for AI is expected to strengthen governance once the strategy is adopted.

Funding is indirect but notable. While there is no dedicated AI budget, the $72.4 million World Bank–funded "Gabon Digital" project finances enabling infrastructure, including a national data center and cybersecurity response center—key foundations for AI deployment.

Public participation has been inclusive at the readiness stage, involving government, academia, civil society, and the private sector through UNESCO-led consultations. However, broader citizen engagement beyond these workshops remains limited.

Implementation is embryonic, with early experiments in education and research, such as plagiarism detection at EM-Gabon Université. These pilots signal interest but lack national scale.

Legally, Gabon has relevant digital laws on data protection and cybersecurity and is aligning with the Malabo Convention, though no AI-specific legislation exists. The CTN-IA's ethics mandate and adherence to UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI demonstrate strong normative intent for responsible governance.

Regionally, Gabon is an active player, hosting sub-regional AI workshops and collaborating with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on AI-driven economic diversification. The Gabonese Innovation Center has also gained visibility through ITU and UNESCO programs.

Internationally, Gabon partners with UNESCO, the World Bank, and Africa50, combining policy support with digital infrastructure investment. Participation in global forums like the Istanbul Summit on AI reinforces its international engagement. While direct foreign AI investment is limited, major infrastructure projects have built a strong foundation for future ecosystem growth.

Overall, Gabon shows institutional maturity, ethical leadership, and regional engagement but lacks a formal strategy and implementation framework. The country is well positioned to transition from readiness to execution once its national AI strategy is finalized and funded.

Total score: 8/24

Democratic Republic of Congo AI policy evaluation

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is developing its first National Artificial Intelligence Strategy (2026–2030), currently in draft form. The process began in 2025 following the technical validation of the National Report on Artificial Intelligence Readiness (RAM) with UNESCO.

The initiative is led by the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications, and Digital Affairs and aligns with the broader National Digital Plan (PNN2).

The AI strategy focuses on technological sovereignty and local innovation in health, education, agriculture, and governance. A Congolese Academy of Artificial Intelligence is planned to train talent and promote research. Funding is integrated within the PNN2's US$1.5 billion budget, combining public and external financing, although AI-specific allocations have not been disclosed.

Policy development appears to follow a participatory model. Two commissions are drafting the digital and AI strategies with representation from the Prime Minister's Office, ministries, academia, and the private sector. Implementation has begun through pilot projects and exploratory agreements around AI-based exam marking, AI-assisted deforestation monitoring, and AI for mining and satellite mapping.

The DRC's policy embeds an Afro-centric and ethical approach, emphasizing respect for linguistic and cultural diversity within a transparent AI governance framework. The country's engagement with UNESCO and participation in the Smart Africa Digital Skills Forum demonstrate early continental collaboration.

Foreign investment and interest in AI is growing. Kobold Metals intends to use AI for geological mapping, while Japan's Solafune Inc. aims to apply satellite data and AI in the mining sector. These projects highlight international confidence in the DRC's emerging AI ecosystem.

Monitoring, evaluation, and legal translation remain underdeveloped, and no AI-specific law is yet in place. Overall, the DRC is at a formative stage—showing strong political will, growing institutional structures, and early pilots that position it for rapid AI integration once the strategy is finalized.

Total score: 8/24

Republic of Congo AI policy evaluation

The Republic of Congo is still developing its National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, first announced in early 2025. A Request for Proposals was issued to draft both the strategy and an accompanying legal and ethical framework (including at least one other listing in June 2025), to be aligned with the existing Congo Digital 2025 vision. As of October 2025, no official document has been published.

Congo hosts the African Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (ARCAI), created with the UN Economic Commission for Africa in 2022. Based in Brazzaville, ARCAI focuses on research, innovation, and skills development in health, agriculture, and education, positioning the country as a regional knowledge hub. However, there is no evidence that ARCAI directly oversees national AI policy.

Funding for AI remains tied to broader digital initiatives. Recent allocations include 38.7 billion CFA francs ($63.9 million) for digital transformation in 2024 and 27 billion CFA francs (about $47.6 million) in EU support, but none specifically earmarked for AI.

Public engagement in AI policy design is limited. Broader digital programs under the National Digital Transformation Project (PATN) include training and inclusive participation principles, but no AI-specific consultations have been documented.

Implementation is nascent. ARCAI conducts training and research, and the government has signed cooperation agreements—such as the Congo–Italy MoU—focused on startup incubation and AI education. However, initiatives remain pilot-level with limited evidence of impact or results, and a comprehensive roadmap remains lacking.

Legally, Congo has a Data Protection Law (Law No. 29-2019) but lacks an operational Data Protection Authority. The forthcoming AI strategy is expected to include a new legal and ethical framework to address these gaps.

Regionally, Congo is active in the Smart Africa Alliance, hosting the Smart Africa Digital Academy and the 2023 Digital Skills Forum. Internationally, the country cooperates with China and multilateral partners to strengthen digital capacity. The AfDB-funded National Data Centre supports infrastructure for future AI expansion.

Overall, the Republic of Congo is at an early stage of AI policy development, with institutional structures and regional engagement but no formal strategy, dedicated funding, or national implementation plan.

Total score: 6/24

Botswana AI policy evaluation

Botswana is still at the start of its AI journey. The country does not yet have a formal national AI strategy, but in 2025 it concluded its AI Readiness Assessment in partnership with UNESCO. This diagnostic exercise maps out the opportunities and risks of AI adoption and will serve as the foundation for a future strategy.

Specificity will be key. While government officials have highlighted potential use cases—such as healthcare, agriculture, education, public service delivery, and wildlife conservation—these remain broad aspirations rather than detailed, costed programs. It's still too early to tell whether Botswana intends to prioritize sectors, create regulatory frameworks, or build an AI skills pipeline in the near term.

Institutionally, the Ministry of Communications and Innovation is leading the readiness process. But there is no dedicated AI authority, cross-ministerial council, or clear mandate for permanent oversight yet. There is also no evidence of a dedicated AI budget, though Botswana has invested in general digital transformation and ICT.

Public participation remains unclear. UNESCO's methodology for AI readiness is designed to be participatory, but there is no published breakdown of who was consulted or how extensively citizens, academia, civil society, and industry were engaged.

Implementation has been visible in small ways. For instance, AI has been deployed in wildlife monitoring, with the U.S. Embassy funding a drone and AI project at the Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST). Such pilots show experimentation.

Monitoring and evaluation are understandably absent, and no AI law exists, though Botswana's data protection law provides a partial legal backbone. Ethics are nominally present, as the readiness exercise would follow UNESCO's AI ethics recommendations. However, since the report itself is not public, it's impossible to verify the strength of Botswana's commitments.

Regionally, Botswana has begun to participate in continental discussions, such as hosting the African Union of Broadcasting General Assembly in 2024, which launched an AI Observatory. Internationally, however, its AI footprint is minimal. Foreign investment is also negligible, with the notable exception of the earlier mentioned donor-backed pilot at BIUST, which remains small-scale.

Botswana is at the diagnostic stage—mapping, consulting, and piloting. But until a strategy, budget, and institutional framework emerge, the country's AI development remains largely preparatory.

Total score: 3/24.

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Comparative analyses

State of AI Policy in Africa 2025

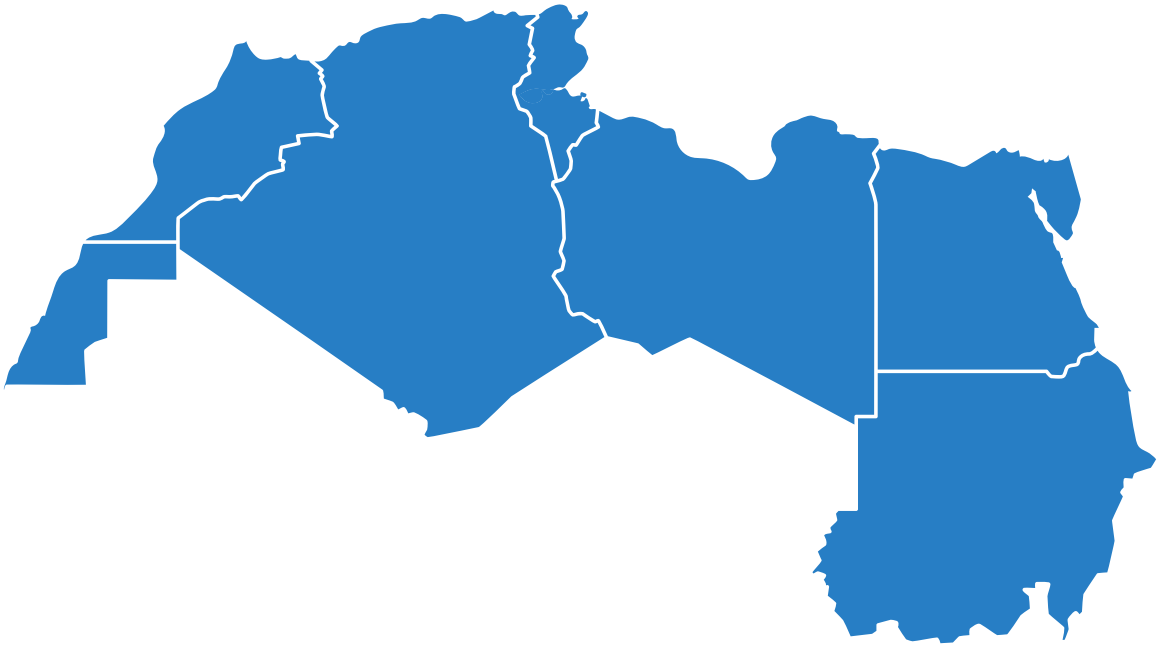
AI policy is moving fast across Africa, but progress is uneven. A look across regions shows clear strengths and persistent gaps in how countries are approaching strategy, funding, implementation, and governance.

North Africa

North Africa is further ahead on infrastructure and regional convening. Egypt has published a second edition of its strategy, backed by clear KPIs, strong institutional design through the National Council for Artificial Intelligence, and billions in investment for data centers and AI startups.

Algeria, though later to move, has set up a dedicated AI Council and launched the National School of Artificial Intelligence. It is also experimenting with local language large language models and has attracted $600 million in venture funding with UAE backing.

Where both falter is in law and participation. Neither has binding AI legislation, and Algeria's strategy especially is expert-driven, with little visible citizen engagement.



East Africa

East Africa is leading on direct budgets and partnerships. Ethiopia has committed over $7 million annually to AI through its AI Institute and rolled out visible projects like Smart Courts and cancer detection tools.

Kenya has gone further, budgeting $1.1 billion to 2030 and securing a $1 billion geothermal-powered data center from Microsoft and G42. Rwanda is thinner on money but stands out in diplomacy, hosting the 90-country Global AI Summit and aligning closely with UN and ISO bodies.

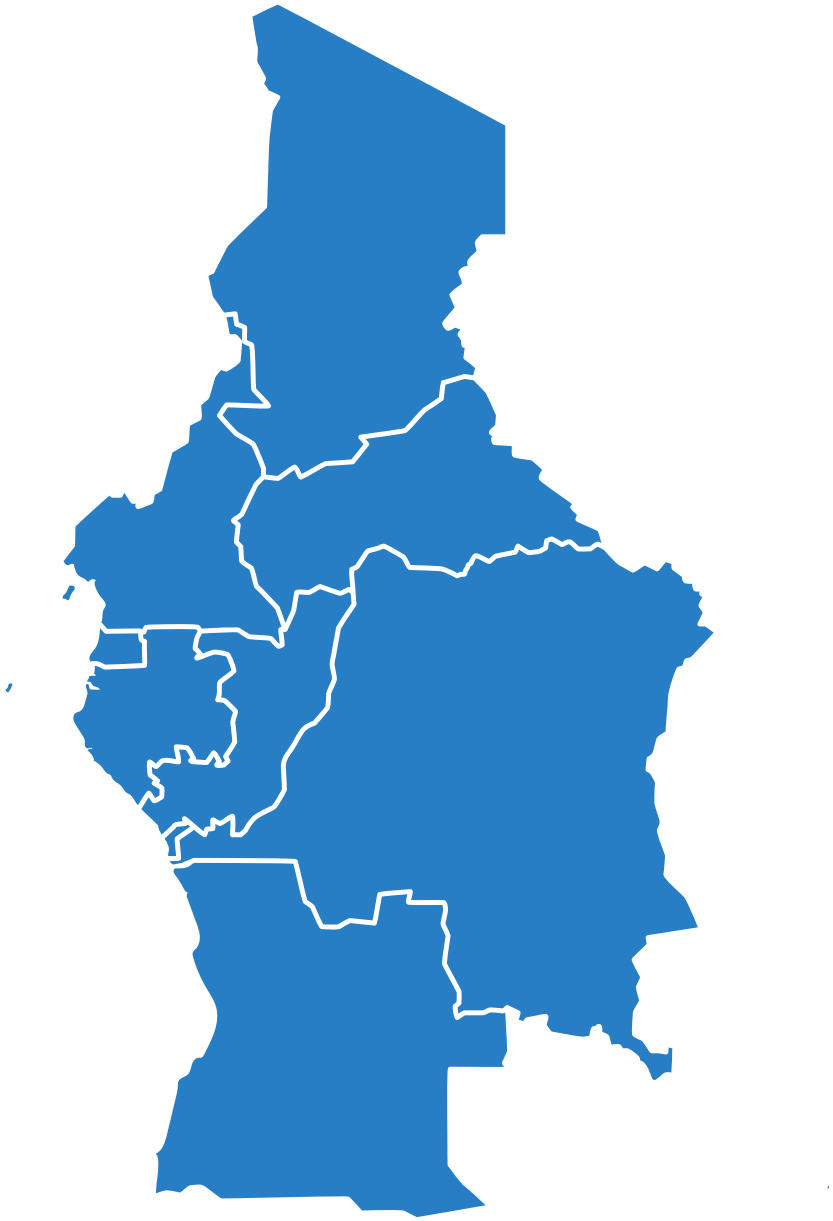
Tanzania, still in the preparatory stage, has drafted a national AI strategy and launched an annual AI Forum, signaling growing coordination and ethical focus despite limited funding.

All four lack binding laws and rely on vague monitoring systems, but Kenya and Ethiopia's financial commitments set them apart.

Central Africa

Cameroon is the only Central African state with a published AI strategy, launched in July 2025. Other Central African countries show AI policy activity. Gabon, for instance, has completed a Readiness Assessment and established a National Technical Committee for AI, but has not published a full AI strategy. The Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa) and the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville) are in nascent policy formulation and institutional setup phases. The Republic of the Congo in particular hosts the African Centre for Research on AI.

In summary: Cameroon leads in AI policy within Central Africa. Its neighbors remain at preliminary or diagnostic phases, without dedicated AI frameworks or institutional commitments.

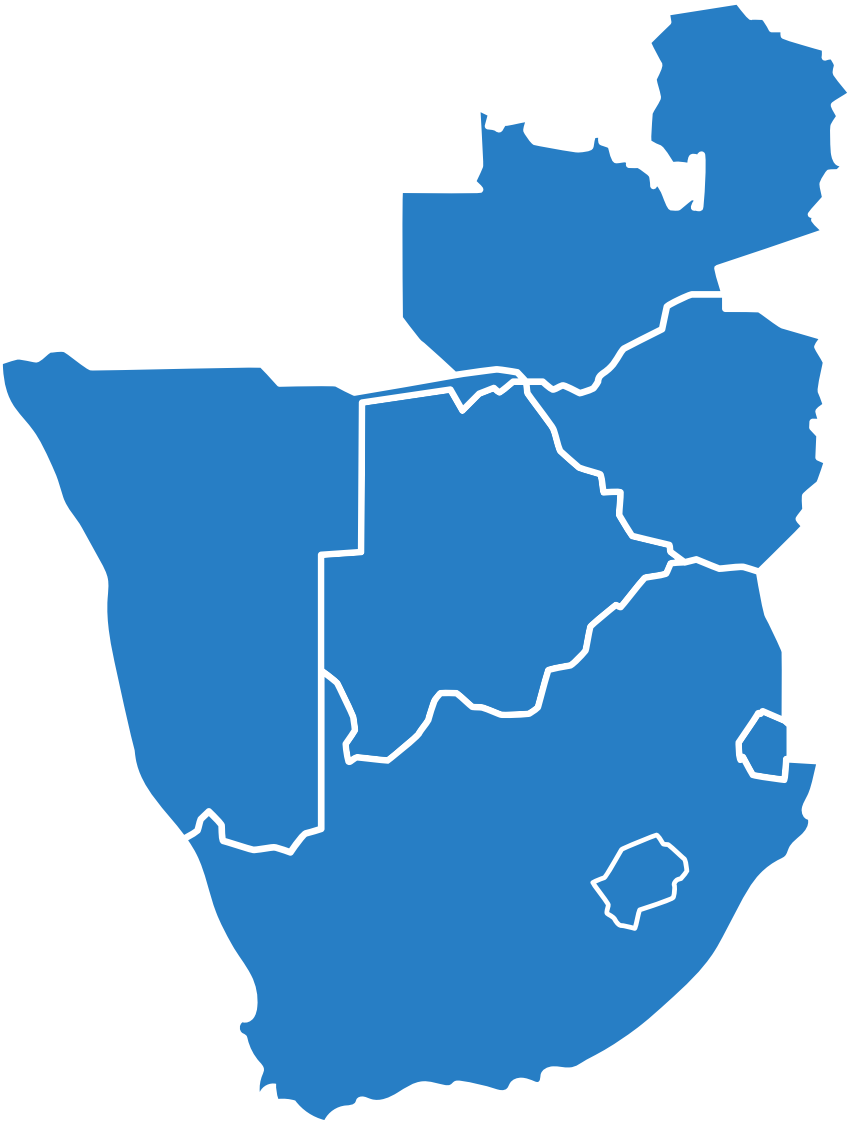


Southern Africa

Southern Africa shows wide variation. South Africa has yet to pass a formal policy but already commits real money: nearly R500 million over four years for AI and blockchain, with major foreign investment like Microsoft's R5.4 billion pledge. Implementation is visible across fraud detection, policing, and visa processing.

Zambia has a published strategy, modest funding of $335,000, and a strong institutional anchor in the Ministry of Technology and Science. Universities are already integrating AI into teaching. Namibia, Lesotho, Botswana, and Zimbabwe sit at earlier stages—running readiness assessments or drafts—but they show signs of participation and pilots.

Overall, South Africa and Zambia lead, but most of the region lags on financing, legislation, and foreign investment.

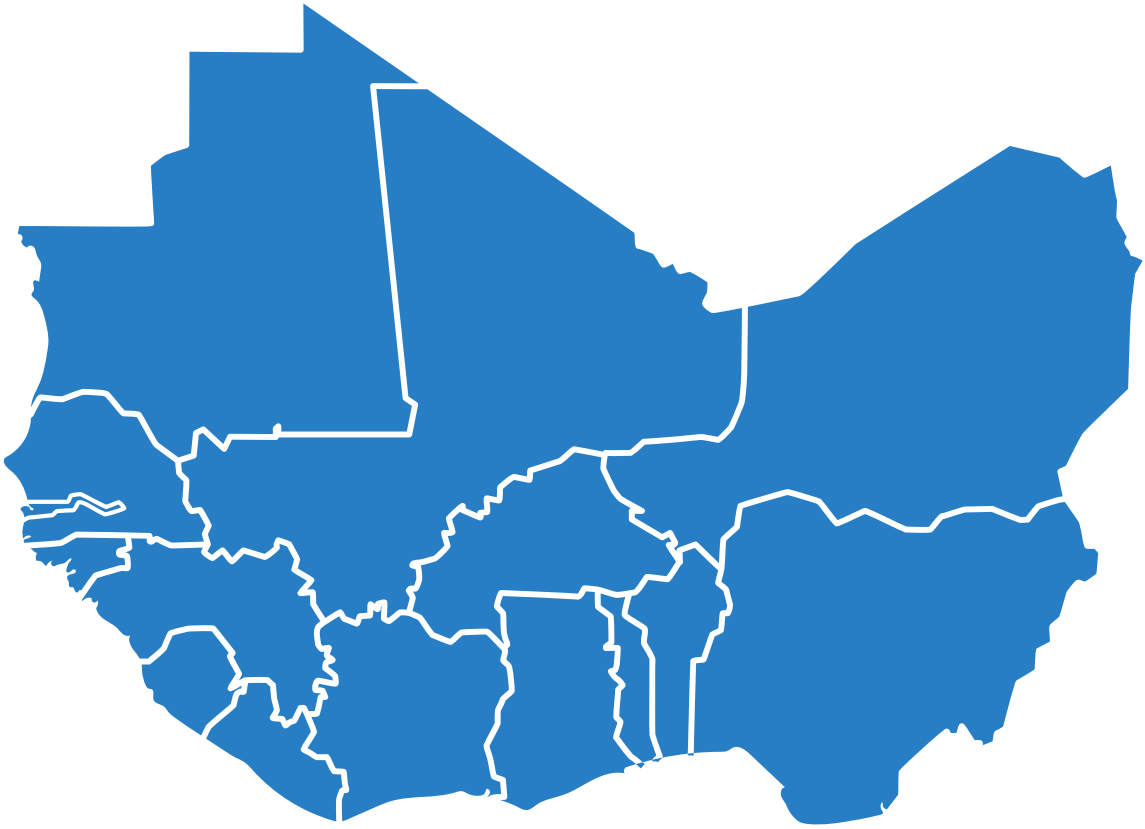


West Africa

West Africa is the most diverse. Nigeria and Ghana are leading on implementation and investment. Nigeria has launched an open-source language model, signed a Gates-backed AI scaling hub, and attracted hundreds of millions in foreign-backed infrastructure. Ghana has a 10-year strategy, strong participation, and active deployments across health, finance, and agriculture, with Google and Japan-backed AI hubs underway.

Senegal has one of the few fully costed strategies on the continent, allocating $46 million to research and training. Côte d'Ivoire and Benin have strategies with defined actions and institutional anchors, but both are weaker on budgets and enforcement. Burkina Faso is only drafting its first action plan.

Participation levels are generally high, especially in Ghana, Nigeria, and Benin, but budgets remain a gap outside Senegal. No West African country has enacted AI-specific laws.



Common regional gaps

Across all regions, the same weaknesses recur. Few countries have built clear monitoring and evaluation systems, and most rely on general ICT budgets instead of dedicated AI funding. Binding AI laws are absent everywhere.

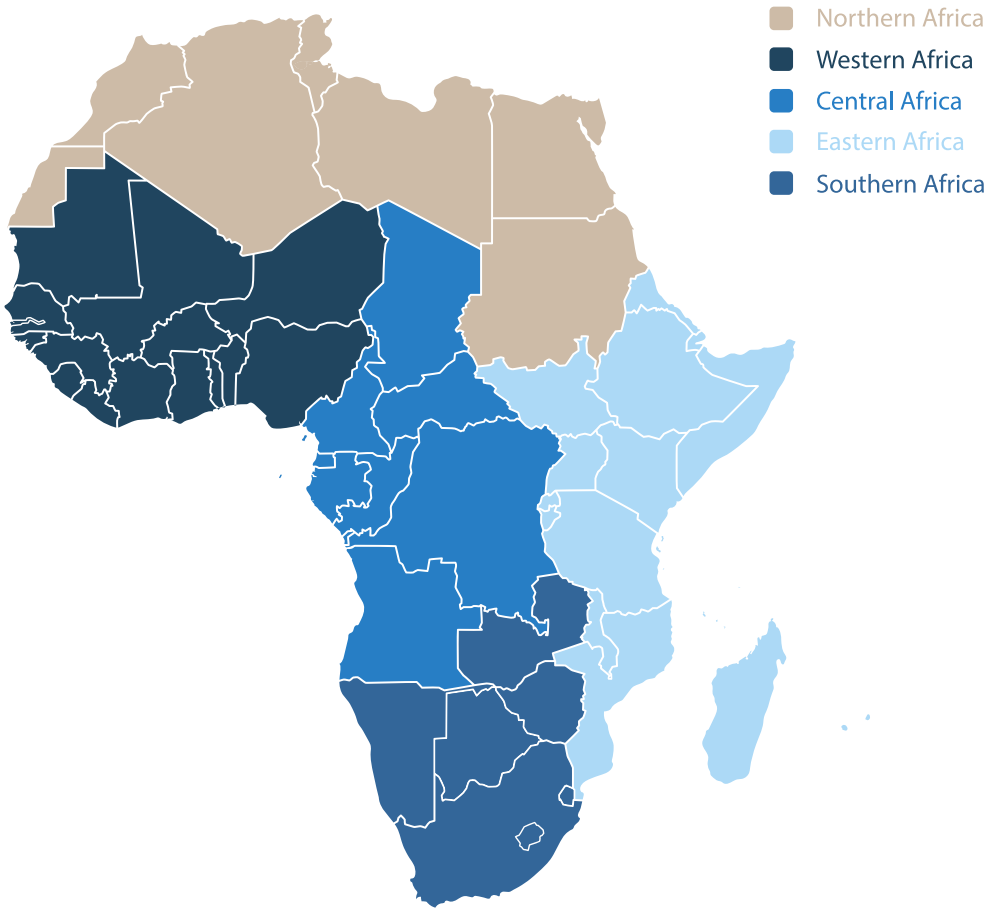
Ethical commitments are usually broad principles without enforceable rules. Public participation shows wide variation: Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, and Lesotho stressed inclusivity, while Algeria and Rwanda leaned more on experts and ministries.

Foreign AI investment is concentrated in a few hubs—Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa—leaving many others dependent on donor-backed digital infrastructure rather than AI-focused capital.

Too many countries still don't publish publicly-accessible documents on official websites; and if there are pilots underway, they're not sufficiently announced and promoted online.

In short, Africa is no longer at the AI starting line. Most regions now have at least one country with a published strategy, defined institutions, and real investment.

But until monitoring frameworks, legal tools, public transparency, and broader foreign investment spread beyond a handful of capitals, progress will remain uneven and concentrated.



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Recommendations

State of AI Policy in Africa 2025

Africa's AI landscape shows impressive ambition but uneven execution. Some countries have developed costed strategies and built institutions, while others remain stuck in draft mode. To move from strategy to implementation, Africa's AI approach needs fewer priorities, but deeper action in each. These can be grouped into four key areas: governance and ethics, capacity and data, sustainable investment, and political leadership.

The following recommendations build on detailed country analyses and insights from global experts, including Ngozi Aderibigbe (Managing Partner, Gray & Silicon in Lagos, Nigeria); Danish Rayola (AI governance, IP, and cybersecurity law expert based in Los Angeles, USA); Ayantola Alayande, an Oxford-based AI governance & technology policy researcher at the Global Center on AI Governance; and Robert Munjoma (ethical AI advocate and author of Mindful Machines, Masterful Humans, based in Virginia, USA). Their contributions ensure that African AI policy is rooted in local needs but informed by global expertise.

1. Governance, law, and ethics

African countries need clear, enforceable laws that protect rights while supporting innovation. Many strategies talk about "responsible" or "ethical" AI but stop short of binding rules. Egypt, Senegal, and Nigeria all refer to ethics, yet few have regulations that define what those ethics mean in practice.

Ngozi Aderibigbe points out that governments must "strike a delicate balance between protectionism through data protection laws and the need for Africa to enable and prioritise home-grown AI development." Danish Rayola adds that while 35 countries have data protection laws, many regulators "lack the authority or resources to audit algorithms, mandate impact assessments, or sanction misuse." Together, these gaps show why African policymakers need laws with teeth.

AI regulation should move beyond high-level ethics into clear standards for data use, algorithmic accountability, and liability. Courts will also have to adapt—developing jurisprudence on AI bias, copyright disputes, and automated decision-making. That means investing in judicial training, creating regional panels to share precedents, and publishing early AI-related judgments to guide the continent.

Ethical AI is not just a government duty. Universities and training institutes should integrate ethics into AI degrees through real-world case studies, not just theory. Students should examine how bias, misinformation, and exclusion show up in systems used for hiring, credit, or surveillance. This ensures future AI builders understand the social impact of their work. Ethical literacy must cut across ministries, universities, civil society, and private companies, rather than sit in one department.

> **African governments must strike a delicate balance between protectionism through data protection laws and the need for Africa to enable and prioritise home-grown AI development.**
>
> Ngozi Aderibigbe Managing Partner @ Gray & Silicon

2. Capacity, data, and infrastructure

Alayande highlights three core challenges for African AI: poor infrastructure, limited talent, and slow policy development. AI depends on people and data. Without investment in both, strategies will stay on paper. Governments must build local datasets that reflect their populations, because imported data often produces biased or irrelevant results. As Aderibigbe advises, policies should "encourage the collection and aggregation of anonymised local data" through open data initiatives and partnerships with universities, telecoms, hospitals, and cooperatives.

National statistical offices can coordinate this work, setting standards for anonymization and quality control. Community-level data collection—through mobile tools, local innovation hubs, and citizen reporting—can fill knowledge gaps in health, agriculture, and transport. Governments should also set up public data observatories to share information while protecting privacy.

On the human side, Africa's AI workforce needs to expand beyond a few elite programs. Civil servants, judges, journalists, and educators all need exposure to AI basics. Countries could create national AI training hubs or public–private scholarship schemes to build this capacity. Rayola highlights the need for law schools to include "AI ethics, cybersecurity, and digital rights" in their curricula—this logic applies to other fields too. Mid-career reskilling programs can help workers transition from traditional industries into data-driven roles.

Infrastructure must grow alongside talent. Africa's data centers and compute capacity are concentrated in a few countries. Regional cooperation can help smaller economies share resources through cross-border cloud zones or shared research clusters. Governments should also plan for maintenance—many projects fail not from lack of launch funding, but from poor upkeep and technical support.

> **Many regulators lack the authority or resources to audit algorithms, mandate impact assessments, or sanction misuse.**
>
> Danish Rayola
>
> Data Privacy & Tech Regulation Specialist

3. Sustainable financing and economic opportunity

Funding is the biggest differentiator between successful and stalled AI strategies. Senegal costed its plan at $46 million, while Kenya estimated $1.1 billion to 2030. Ethiopia's AI institute increased its budget by 42%. In contrast, many countries depend on donors or general ICT funds that get reallocated when priorities shift.

Sustainable financing means ring-fenced, multi-year budgets tied to measurable projects. Independent AI funding councils could review spending, enforce transparency, and publish annual outcomes. Public–private partnerships should include local content requirements so communities benefit directly from AI projects. Aderibigbe, Mujoma and Rayola both note that without strong governance, financial capture and regulatory gaps can erode trust.

> **Legal institutions should invest in capacity building by integrating AI ethics, cybersecurity, and digital rights into bar training and law school curricula, equipping the next generation of lawyers to advise on AI governance.**
>
> — Danish Rayola
>
> Data Privacy & Tech Regulation Specialist

To expand financing options, governments could levy modest digital service taxes on large technology platforms or reinvest tax revenues from the digital economy into national AI funds. Regional co-financing—through an AU or SADC AI Fund—could help smaller states build shared infrastructure. Governments should also plan for downturns by creating contingency reserves for long-term technology investments.

AI spending will ripple through economies. It will create new jobs in data labeling, model testing, and AI auditing, while boosting demand for engineers and policy experts. But it may also displace low-skill roles in customer service or logistics. Governments should plan reskilling programs early, aligning industrial policy with digital transformation so growth benefits are widely shared.

The same applies to procurement. Vendor capture—where governments become dependent on a few big tech providers—often coincides with corruption. Open procurement databases, independent oversight panels, and clear exit clauses can reduce that risk. Governments should rotate procurement officers, encourage competition from local startups, and require technology transfer in foreign contracts. Transparency is not just good governance—it's economic protection.

Munjoma reinforces this point, noting that procurement contracts must prevent vendor systems from becoming "opaque national infrastructure." His warning reflects the need for governments to plan beyond contract signing—anticipating how foreign partnerships could shape local ecosystems.

> **Procurement contracts must embed transparency clauses to prevent vendor systems from becoming opaque national infrastructure.**
>
> Robert Munjoma — Ethical AI & Transparent ML Advocate

4. Regional cooperation, innovation, and leadership

AI success in Africa will depend on collaboration. Most countries are small markets, but together they can share research, pool data, and attract investors. Regional blocs like ECOWAS, EAC, and SADC should harmonize data protection standards to allow cross-border data flows under common safeguards. Rayola recommends interoperable standards to "reduce compliance fragmentation" and build trust.

Shared projects can amplify returns. The Fon-language AI model built by Benin, Senegal, and Côte d'Ivoire shows what regional innovation looks like in practice. African governments can extend this idea through joint sandboxes, cross-border hackathons, and regional cloud infrastructure. Organizations like the Association of African Universities (AAU) can propose collective curricular changes to higher education on the continent. These collaborations can create economies of scale that no single country could achieve alone.

Intellectual property will also need collective attention. As AI generates new forms of creative and scientific output, regional organizations such as the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) and the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI) should develop shared frameworks for ownership, licensing, and benefit sharing. This will protect communities whose data or culture shape these innovations, while giving African creators global legitimacy.

At the national level, political leadership is the thread that connects all these efforts. Strong leadership means consistency across election cycles, clear accountability, and the courage to treat AI as a national priority, not a side project. Leaders should embed AI strategies in law, link progress to ministerial evaluations, and make results public. Ethiopia's budget increase shows what follow-through looks like; Zimbabwe's repeated delays show what happens without it.

Governments should also see AI as a diplomatic tool. By investing in open research and regional standards, Africa can influence how global AI norms are written. Political will is not just about spending or speeches, but about positioning Africa as a credible, cooperative force shaping the future of technology.

> **Regional blocs such as ECOWAS, EAC and SADC should also harmonize standards for AI data flows to reduce compliance fragmentation**
>
> Danish Rayola
>
> Data Privacy & Tech Regulation Specialist

Africa's next decade in AI will hinge on these four priorities: clear laws and ethics, strong capacity and data ecosystems, sustainable financing tied to results, and regional collaboration under steady leadership. Each depends on the others. Laws without skills fail in practice; funding without ethics breeds misuse; leadership without accountability breeds inertia.

If governments take a practical, transparent, and inclusive approach, AI can help solve real problems—improving public health, boosting productivity, and creating jobs that didn't exist before. With foresight and cooperation, Africa can shape its own AI future rather than inherit someone else's.

Final thoughts

Africa's AI journey is not just about catching up with global peers, but about crafting a path that reflects the continent's realities and strengths. Too often, policy frameworks are borrowed wholesale from other regions with little regard for local context. That approach may fail in Africa.

Africa's philosophical traditions—ubuntu and communitarian thought—offer a distinctive foundation for AI governance. Rooting policies in values of shared responsibility, collective well-being, and equity can create models of AI adoption that are both effective and uniquely African.

But values alone are not enough. Political will must move beyond speeches and declarations. That means creating policies that survive beyond electoral cycles, backed by enforceable laws, dedicated budgets, and strong institutions. Without consistent action and serious investment, Africa risks once again falling behind on the most transformative technology of our time.

AI policy also cannot be separated from the broader economic and development agenda. Data centers need stable electricity. Algorithms need reliable internet. Investors need to see predictable governance, not slow bureaucracy, corruption, or inflation that erodes confidence. Infrastructure, legal systems, education, and economic stability are all tied directly to whether AI succeeds or stalls.

Ultimately, the test of Africa's AI policies will not be in glossy documents, but in how they strengthen existing systems: whether health clinics function better, farmers gain better yields, or schools improve learning outcomes. The challenge ahead is to align policy with practice, and to ensure that Africa's AI future is built on its own strengths, responsive to its own needs, and firmly linked to the foundations of development.

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