A.I → FOR SUSTAINABLE & INCLUSIVE **FUTURES**

EXECUTIVE MEMO

Our approach to Artificial Intelligence for sustainable and inclusive futures

01

AI is game-changing, so must be our policy toolbox

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Artificial intelligence is the third wave of the digital revolution. The latest breakthroughs from Generative AI and Large Language Models – in text generation, translation, summarization, and more – dramatically accelerate the deep change that appeared in the 2010's. Automatizing usual, yet cognitive, tasks is a turnabout, not only for shifts in the workforce but also for a wide range of economic sectors and social behaviors, that needs to be taken into account as soon as possible by a wide range of public, private and civil society actors worldwide.Consistently with the EU willing to develop programs aiming at developing & deploying AI in accordance with the Global Gateway strategy, Expertise France advocates for a strong initiative to be deployed during the next 3 to 4 years. Its objectives would be:
> **Leveraging AI for economic growth**
> **Building capabilities for countries' AI readiness**
> **Supporting regulations based on Responsible AI**

To succeed, it is of high importance to address challenges, discriminations and risks generated by AI by an inclusive approach giving the floor to local and grassroots stakeholders first. Fixing AI bias, designing responsible and impactful policies, and building AI-powered solution to a more sustainable planet, imply to put inclusiveness and local content at the heart of our programs and activities.

A General-Purpose Technology with accelerating impacts on economies, politics and societies

According to a report by McKinsey Global Institute, AI has the potential to contribute $13 trillion to the global economy by 2030, per se about 16% of the world's GDP. The impact of AI on GDP will vary depending on the country and sector, with advanced economies and the service sector expected to see the highest gains.

Succeeding in this general-purpose technology implies to master the whole data life cycle, from collection, curation, machine learning and algorithms training, to scaling Generative AI use cases. Big Data-driven predictive models, and now generative AI, change consumer practices, means of production, as well as communication & media or the way of doing politics. AI now creeps in all collective and individual spheres and is giving birth to new habits and opportunities.

The long tail of AI innovation is driving gains of productivity, especially in services, as well as improving public services & utilities' performance. Analysts say AI could expand Africa's economy by a staggering $1.5 trillion by 2030—about 50% of its current GDP—if it could only capture 10% of the fast-growing global AI market.

AI also contributes to increasing standards of living and meeting with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): **AI technologies could help achieve 79% of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** according to a study published in Nature (2020) and have the potential to bring large-scale improvements in many areas such as health, agriculture and education.

As a French public agency created in 2011, Expertise France has already started working with partners, governments, NGOs and private sector alike, to help them make the most of the take-off of artificial intelligence. A multistakeholder approach is at the center of our activities.

Expertise France works closely with French entities and international partners to design and implement bilateral and multistakeholders' cooperation projects with the objective to strengthen local capacities providing high-quality technical expertise and ultimately help partner countries achieve their sustainable development goals.

It also carries a few threats or drawbacks to be mitigated by a Responsible AI approach. Even without malign intention from developers, non-neutral technology may end up with biased results, which in turn would result in negative societal impact or facilitate discriminatory behaviors. Cyberattacks on critical infrastructures as well as mass media & opinion manipulations -for instance through "deep fake" campaigns – may benefit from AI potential. This is why strong privacy protection policies and conscious regard for data sovereignty are more crucial than ever before. In the meantime, impacts on unemployment are ambiguous, since they may be positive for some regions, some level of skills and some industries, while negative for others. Adjusted and reinforced workforce policies are needed anyway.

Inequality gaps may widen if actions are not taken

Cross-regional inequalities in AI development are stark, between technological powerhouses and newcomers. Emerging ecosystems in Africa, Latin America, and some parts of Asia often struggle to keep pace, in spite of their potential to address region-specific challenges. Bridging this gap can unlock immense opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange, turning these disparities into fertile ground for innovation.

Similarly, gaps in AI readiness and maturity between tech or big corporates and SMEs need to be addressed. Raising AI adoption by SMEs is a prerequisite to level-up quality of jobs and productivity in partner countries.

Yet inner-regional disparities between megacities and rural areas are another concern. A concerted effort to extend technological infrastructure, basic and advanced digital skills, as well as opportunities to less-endowed regions can help ensure that the benefits of AI are distributed more equitably. Gender gap is another discrepancy to be tackled, since over 25% of UNESCO Member States think it is an important issue and can undermine the development and use of a less biased AI (AI needs Assessment Survey in Africa, 2021).

In a time of plasticity, according to the concept highlighted by William MacAskill (2022), where governance, ethic principles and rules of AI are about to crystalize on the world stage, it is in the end of high importance to help partners make their voice heard and considered by the international dialogue. International community's outcome would hence improve for both partner countries and incumbent AI-ready economies, instead of widening gaps and misunderstanding between regions.

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> AI technologies could help achieve 79 % of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). ❞

Emerging partners are endowed with assets and already participate to the AI Revolution

Partner countries are far from being an AI no man's land. For instance, in Africa alone, more than 2400 organizations are specialized in AI, 34% of them being startups or SMEs (employing less than 100 people) and two thirds of them active in 6 economic sectors: information technology services, computer and software, internet, financial services, management consulting, and Telcos (State of AI in Africa, 2022).

In addition, partner countries are endowed with skills and assets enabling AI technologies to offer solutions in a broad range of sectors by supporting the provision of food, health, water, and energy services to the population, underpinning low-carbon systems. AI can also enable smart and low-carbon cities encompassing a range of interconnected technologies such as electrical autonomous vehicles and smart appliances, or integrating variable renewables by enabling smart grids.

Demography is also a strength for most partners. Given that a significant portion of the population consists of digital natives, particularly those under 30, partner countries have facilities in adopting at high-speed AI innovations, provided that they are equipped with state-of-the-art data, telco, and IT infrastructures. To some extent, young digital natives are a significant demographic asset, giving their home country the opportunity to benefit from the leapfrog effect.

02

AI policy toolkit: intervention pillars

A comprehensive action plan

Addressing issues surrounding AI requires a holistic and empowering approach based on a renewed policy toolbox, from development and regulations to deployment of AI.

Expertise France deeply believes that our partner countries or stakeholders shall find their own path in AI take-off. Hence, the agency will mobilize knowledge, know-how and research expertise in an open, mindful and inclusive way giving our partners the opportunity and capability of building their own AI-development model.

Consistently with EU Global Gateway strategy, activities would concern Data & Computer Power, Governance and Regulatory Framework, Universal and Affordable Access, Secure Connectivity, Skills & Literacy, Entrepreneurship, Cybersecurity & Disinformation, and the Green Deal.

Leveraging AI for economic growth

To unlock substantial productivity gains and fully harness the economic potential of AI, main activities should concern:

> Fostering an Innovation and Entrepreneurship-Friendly Environment for accelerating Ecosystem building and growing new AI solutions & businesses.
> Accelerating Mass Adoption by SMEs to release positive economic impacts widely.
> Promoting Equal Access to address regional disparities as well as gender gap s and ensure that the benefits of AI are equitably distributed.
> Targeting Green Transition to capitalize on partner countries' immense potential in developing local AI technologies and addressing SDG's.

This economic pillar will not exclusively focus on startups and tech actors. Expertise France suggests focusing significant efforts towards SMEs, as a key driver for productivity gains as well as jobs creations in partner countries. AI-ready SMEs would also contribute to local demand for homegrown tech solutions.

Building capabilities for countries' AI readiness

Building AI capabilities in emerging countries requires a comprehensive strategy considering

Guiding principles of Expertise France' actions

when it comes to Artificial Intelligence are:
> **Sustainable Growth:** AI can play a pivotal role in contributing to Digital and Green transitions, addressing environmental and economic challenges simultaneously.
> **Promoting local content & cultural awareness:** There is no one size fits all. AI solutions must be built to meet local, cultural and social contexts.
> **Building Capabilities:** Investing in AI capabilities, from digital infrastructure to workforce up-skilling & digital literacy, is crucial to help partners to keep with the pace of the AI-race.
> **Responsible AI:** Sustainable development also comes from trustworthiness. A step further from human rights, privacy protection, transparency, explainability, robustness, human control and data sovereignty, Expertise France will help partners to find their way in implementing these principles in a sound way consistent with peculiar local & cultural contexts.

Expertise France' activities in AI

⟶ Sustainable Growth & Responsible AI

Expertise France stands ready to support initiatives aiming to define and implement Responsible AI guidelines from international to regional and local levels. The Agency has, for instance, facilitated the elaboration of National AI Strategy from Senegal (2023), which puts ethical AI at the core of an ambitious roadmap to make AI a key driver for domestic growth.

⟶ Green Deal

Expertise France contributed to the multistakeholder dialogue on Greentech in Egypt (2022): Egyptian and European tech actors bounded to boost Egypt's green technology industry by leveraging AI for a more resilient agriculture and sustainable smart cities.

⟶ Building capabilities & ecosystems

Regulatory sandboxes, ecosystem building and improving access to finance are the three cornerstones of any economic-driven strategy. Expertise France has already facilitated the elaboration of National AI Strategy in Greece and is currently formulating activities in the context of the EU program for Digital Transformation in Egypt to support the operationalization of the AI strategy in top priority sectors.

⟶ South-South policies

Expertise France has also contributed to South-South cooperation for instance through supporting the organization of a Senegal-Rwanda Study Tour in 2023. This action aims at tightening relations between digital actors in Senegal, Rwanda and Europe as well as helping Senegal Department in charge of Digital to operationalize its AI strategy.

⟶ Data Governance

Expertise France is supporting partner countries in integrating Open Government Partnership, which resulted in Africa in Projet d'Appui aux Gouvernements Ouverts Francophones: Expertise France is for example already supporting Benin to conceive and enforce its Open Data Policies in this framework.

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skills, connectivity, and research as critical infrastructures. Human & technical infrastructures all work in networks and unlock synergies. Main activities shall concern:

> Building strong Data Infrastructures to equip local economies with technical & basic infrastructures of the AI age.

> Multiplying Digital Commons to spread data, tools and free local creativity.

> Enhancing Research Support to build up cutting edge innovation on local expertise and grey matter

> Accelerating Workforce literacy and up-skilling to help workers handling with digital & AI tools in new or transforming jobs.

Supporting Regulations based on Responsible AI Strategy

The rapid take-off of AI raises a multitude of ethical questions regarding data collection, algorithmic biases, and potential misuse for manipulation, disinformation, or mass surveillance. It is crucial to address these concerns and ensure that AI is transparent and trustworthy in its operations. Building trust in AI is fundamental for a fair, thriving, and harmonious development. Activities should aim at:

> Cultivating trust & raising awareness among both public and private stakeholders. Establishing clear principles and guidelines to assess, analyze, and report on AI systems, emphasizing security, privacy, transparency, and non-discrimination.

> Promoting international, regional, and local cooperation to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration in AI governance.

03
Activities

Chapter	Activities	Actions	Global Gateway
Growth & Twin Transition	**Create an AI & innovation friendly environment for startups and MSMEs**	Co-designing the creation of AI regulatory sandboxes specifically dedicated to startups and SMEs could help spread innovation in incumbent industries.	*Entrepreneurship*
		Helping partner countries in designing relevant KPIs to implement data driven policies & AI national strategies.	*Ecosystem Building / Governance & Regulatory Framework*
		Promoting Ecosystem building in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia, which a focus on homegrown solutions tackling climate change, agriculture, healthcare, and education.	*Green deal*
		Improving access to capital (direct grants, alternative financ ing mech a nisms, investment readiness assess ment & guidelines).	*Entrepreneurship*
	Encourage mass adoption of AI , targeting SMEs in priority	Raise SMEs AI maturity through tailored expert support.	*Universal and Affordable Acces*
		Implementing various incentives for SMEs and mature companies to adopt AI services (vouchers, tax breaks).	*Universal and Affordable Acces*
		Design & Release Public Procu rement Framework dedicated to A I innovation (Labeling AI startups & SMEs, Fast Market Access).	*Entrepreneurship*
		Support Open Data Government Policies to provide high quality training data for startups, with a prior focus on use cases related to healthcare, climate change and other areas of the green transition.	*Green Deal*
		Promote international visibility to accelerate successful go to market for homegrown AI solutions.	*Entrepreneurship*
	Adopt an inclusive approach to reduce regional disparities and unlock full AI potential	Fostering the collect ive , gathering and labeling of local and regional datasets is necessary to grow solutions specifically adequate to Africa, Asia and Latin American contexts and build a more in clusive AI (program leveraging E uropean PHD students)	*Entrepreneurship*
		Support women led initiatives at local, national and regional level.	*Entrepreneurship*
		Creating AI Centers of Excellence & Public Access.	*Ecosystem Building*
		Enhancing Global Collaboration to boost AI innovation & growth, with a prior focus on climate change and other areas of the green transition (Global network bounding African, Asian & South American AI hubs ; Peer to Peer collaboration between European AI hubs and this Global Network).	*Ecosystem Building*

Chapter	Activities	Actions	Global Gateway
Capabilities Building	**Build Data critical infrastructures**	Host and moderate h igh level policy dialogue on Cybersecurity and Public Data & Infrastructures Policies	*Data & Computer Power*
		Encourage public & private investments and fund multistakeholder initiatives in data centers and Internet connectivity on under equipped territories.	*Data & Computer Power*
		Promote public & private collaboration in data collection and high quality datasets in prior secto rs and for sensitive data (ID , healthcare, environment, education, agriculture, and cybersecurity).	*Data & Computer Power*
		Coordinate cooperative task forces and co creation of ambitious cybersecurity policies at local, regional and international level.	*Data & Computer Power*
		Co-create Open Data Policy & Digital public services frameworks and toolkits	*Data & Computer Power*
		Support public private initiatives on energy optimization of Datacenters	*Green deal*
	Promote Digital Commons	Co-creating a Digital Commons toolbox, helping projects to implement rapidly state of the art practices and governance framework.	*Cybersecurity & Disinformation*
		Encouraging the development and sharing of AI Open source tools, Open source libraries, and Open source frameworks (financing & technical assistance).	*Data & Computer Power*
		Deploying training programs to Open source standards & frameworks for Developers, Ecosystem Actors as well as Researchers.	*Data & Computer Power*
		Creating repositories for AI research papers, codes, and models.	*Data & Computer Power*
		Supporting the participation of African, Latin America and Southeast Asia experts, researchers, academia, and ecosystem actors to regional & international Open source communities.	*Ecosystem Building*
	Enhance Research Capacities	Providing technical assistance and supply funding to national High Performance Calculus (HPC) centers, in relation with private actors.	*Data & Computer Power*
		Investing massively in secure and interconnected digital networks a s well as internet connect ivity benefiting to academia and local research centers.	*Secure connectivity*
		Encouraging international partnerships and collaborations between AI research institutions and organizations.	*Ecosystem Building*
		Providing research grants and funding opportunities for African, Asian or Latin American talents.	*Ecosystem Building*
	Upgrade Workforce skills	Co-create workforce employment & up skilling policy toolbox at local, regional and cross region levels. These programs would target young people, private sector employees, SMEs managers as well as civil servants.	*Skills & Literacy*
		Design and deploy Digital basic skills programs on local and national levels . These programs would target young people, pri vate sector employees , SMEs managers as well as civil servants.	*Skills & Literacy*
		Support industry & academia partnership in designing and deploying vocational programs on AI skills.	*Skills & Literacy*
		Foster collaborations between universities, research institutions, and industry to align educational curricula with real world AI demands.	*Skills & Literacy*

Chapter	Activities	Actions	Global Gateway
Responsible AI	**and awareness on Responsible AI**	Contribute to high level dialogue between stakeholders, academia, NGOs, companies and Government about diversity in cultural, socio economic and cultural approaches of Responsible AI.	*Governance & Regulatory Framework*
		Co-build comprehensive mapping of domestic AI with partner countries' actors.	*Ecosystem Building*
		Organizing Multi stakeholders ' fora on Responsible AI Business approach.	*Governance & Regulatory Framework*
		Supporting the deployment of training sessions for deeper public leaders ' knowledge and awareness on AI impacts and the use of Responsible AI.	*Governance & Regulatory Framework*
		Contribute to dialogue with internet platforms and other key stakeholders at country level on the use of AI driven content moderation, consistently with international standards of human rights.	*Governance & Regulatory Framework*
	Develop consensus on Responsible AI principles & assessment framework	Support local initiatives and any national, regional or international institution in designing a Responsible AI Agenda followed by the definition of an AI Policy , through participatory processes.	*Governance & Regulatory Framework*
		Promoting accountability and rights protection in the AI ecosystem through the building of specific task forces, elaboration of multistakeholder Responsible AI assessments, and supporting multistakeholder expert level dialogues.	*Governance & Regulatory Framework*
		Encourage multistakeholder & cross regions partnerships.	*Ecosytem Building*
		Promote diverse teams of practitioners ', by funding travel of African and South American experts to AI global fora or cross cultural & cross geography research teams.	*Governance & Regulatory Framework*
	Scale Responsible AI implementation & enforcement across different geographical regions.	Initiating the emergence of regional and local platforms dedicated to Res ponsible AI Communities and emp owering common actions.	*Governance & Regulatory Framework*
		Co-create Regulatory Sandboxes, with private sector to maintain balance between innovation & trust.	*Governance & Regulatory Framework*
		Help regional organizations in defining actionable plan for Responsible AI guidelines implementation at the national or local level. This could also consist in bottom up synthesis of local and national good practices share at the upper level.	*Governance & Regulatory Framework*
		Support the experimentation of AI use cases in areas such as cybersecurity, combating disinformation, and digitizing public services. Additionally, promote the application of AI for justice and law professionals, and define guidelines for responsible AI use in law enforcement procedures.	*Cybersec urity & Disinformation*