



Advancing Digital Sovereignty for the Public Sector in Europe

A 4-step guide to building resilient, sovereign
technology foundations



The new imperative for digital sovereignty

Geopolitical shifts, new regulations and supply chain risks are exposing hidden dependencies in public sector technology. **Fifty-five percent of government CIOs globally (excluding the U.S.) have changed vendor engagement strategies based on regional factors, but far fewer have taken meaningful action.** This highlights urgent concerns about digital sovereignty and uncertainty for technology leaders.

By 2028, 65% of governments will require technological sovereignty to boost independence and protect against extraterritorial regulations. While data residency and cloud localization are often the focus, genuine digital sovereignty demands a holistic approach — covering data, operational control and technology ownership. Yet, **60% of government digital sovereignty initiatives will fall short by 2028 due to unrealistic timelines and investment estimates.**

Overlooking foreign dependencies can lead to critical infrastructure failures, service disruptions and increased board-level scrutiny. In this fast-changing environment, public sector leaders in Europe must build resilient, future-ready technology foundations to secure sovereignty and drive sustainable innovation.

Approach to vendor engagement in the next six months

Percentage of global government respondents (without U.S.), multiple responses allowed

55%

Significant changes to vendor engagement based on region anticipated*



45%

No significant changes to vendor engagement based on region anticipated

* Share is significantly higher among European government respondents
n = 284; Global government CIOs and technology executives answering (without U.S.)
Q: Which of the following characterize your enterprise’s approach to engaging with technology vendors in the next six months?
Source: 2026 Gartner CIO and Technology Executive Survey

3 essential questions for advancing digital sovereignty in Europe’s public sector

- 1

How do I map and mitigate foreign influence across our technology stack?
- 2

What trade-offs must be considered between sovereignty, cost and innovation?
- 3

How can I ensure our digital infrastructure is future-ready for geopolitical shocks?

What are the key stages?

Designed for public sector leaders, this roadmap provides clear, actionable steps to help you address digital sovereignty challenges, reduce foreign dependencies and build resilient, future-ready technology foundations.





Establish a holistic sovereignty vision

Key outcome: A clear mandate from internal and external stakeholders to secure control over data, operations and technology.

Actions to take:

- ☐ **Educate** stakeholders on the full spectrum of sovereignty risks: data, operational and technology sovereignty.
- ☐ **Use** scenario planning (e.g., cloud service termination, hardware supply disruption) to translate abstract risks into tangible consequences.
- ☐ **Initiate** a sovereignty risk assessment workshop with Gartner Executive Partner.

Sample of Gartner client resources include:

Insights

- [Predicts 2026: AI and Sovereignty Risks Demand Urgent Action From Governments Globally](#)
- [Raising Digital Sovereignty and Resilience in Government](#)
- [Digital Sovereignty Impacts on Government Technology Investments](#)

Executive Briefing

- [Navigating Digital Sovereignty in Government](#)

Toolkit

- [Government Scenario-Planning Workshop for Strategic Planning](#)

[On-Demand Virtual Briefing: Sovereign AI in Public Sector: Challenges, Opportunities and the Road Ahead](#)

Establish a holistic
sovereignty vision



Map and audit foreign
dependencies



Prioritize and
sequence sovereignty
initiatives



Leverage European
approaches for
local strategy



Map and audit foreign dependencies

Key outcome: A comprehensive dependency matrix highlighting direct and indirect foreign influence.

Actions to take:

- ☐ **Conduct** a vertical and horizontal audit of technology stacks (applications, platforms, infrastructure) across information systems, digital workplaces, service delivery and AI.
- ☐ **Prioritize** components for sovereignty action based on risk exposure and mission value.
- ☐ **Engage** with Gartner analysts for best practices in dependency mapping.

Sample of Gartner client resources include:

Insights

- [Beyond Sovereignty: When Geopatriation Clashes With Data Survivability](#)
- [How Sovereign AI Impacts Enterprise Opportunity and Creates Nonobvious Threat](#)
- [Shattered Norms: How CIOs Navigate Digital Nation States and AI Power Blocs](#)

Tool

- [Digital Sovereignty Risk Assessment for Government](#)

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Prioritize and sequence sovereignty initiatives

Key outcome: A risk-based, value-driven roadmap for sovereignty investments.

Actions to take:

- ☐ **Use** risk assessment tools (heat maps, dependency matrices) to prioritize initiatives.
- ☐ **Balance** trade-offs: cost, capability, scalability and internal capacity.
- ☐ **Secure** cross-functional buy-in for phased implementation.

Sample of Gartner client resources include:

Insights

- [Raise Digital Government Maturity Amid AI and Sovereignty Disruptions](#)
- [Reclaiming Sovereignty: Open-Source Productivity Suites for Geopolitical Risk Mitigation](#)

Tool

- [European CIOs Sovereign Strategy Playbook](#)
- [Gartner Digital Government Maturity Model](#)

Establish a holistic sovereignty vision



Map and audit foreign dependencies



Prioritize and sequence sovereignty initiatives



Leverage European approaches for local strategy



Leverage European approaches for local strategy

Key outcome: A locally tailored sovereignty strategy informed by European best practices.

Actions to take:

- ☐ **Benchmark** against European leaders (e.g., France's LaSuite, Italy's IO app, Denmark's move away from Microsoft Office).
- ☐ **Build** local ecosystem resilience through public-private partnerships, regional supply chains and GovTech collaboration.
- ☐ **Advocate** for investments in digital public infrastructure (DPI), open source and local talent.

Sample of Gartner client resources include:

Insights

- [Market Guide for Digital Sovereignty Solutions](#)
- [Beyond Sovereignty: Key Criteria for Selecting a Cloud Provider for Geopatriation](#)
- [Prioritize on Sovereign Capabilities When Choosing Your Cloud Provider](#)

First Take

- [European Commission's Sovereign Cloud Award Warrants a Systematic Approach by CIOs](#)

Streamline technology buying decisions with the **Gartner BuySmart™** tool.

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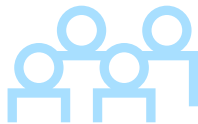
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Who needs to be involved?

The most successful government organizations establish cross-functional teams with clear responsibilities for digital sovereignty. For technology, data and operational sovereignty, the following roles are essential.



Actionable, objective insights

Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for public sector leaders:

eBook



Modernizing Public Sector Infrastructure

Modernize public sector infrastructure for greater efficiency, resilience and citizen value.

[Download Now](#)

Webinar



Virtual Briefing: Sovereign AI in Public Sector

Learn how to navigate sovereign AI to maintain control, mitigate risks and drive outcomes.

[Watch Now](#)

Webinar



Achieve and Maintain Digital Sovereignty in a Fast Changing World

Manage vendor dependencies, balance risk and innovation and ensure resilient IT capabilities.

[Watch Now](#)

Tool



Government CIO Accelerators

Explore our step-by-step tools and diagnostics tailored specifically for government CIOs.

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