

Unlocking AI Value for the Public Sector

A 5-step guide to developing a secure AI
strategy for faster, smarter mission outcomes



Are governments ready for the next wave of AI and digital sovereignty?

How can government leaders balance innovation with resilience to ensure their AI and digital strategies deliver real, sustainable impact?

Governments worldwide are racing to deploy AI and digital technologies to transform public services and meet rising citizen expectations. Yet, as adoption accelerates, regulation and governance are struggling to keep pace, which presents significant risks.

By 2029, underregulated AI agent interactions are expected to cause 20% of government service failures, threatening public trust at a time when digital ambitions have never been higher.

Meanwhile, digital and AI sovereignty initiatives are fragmenting under the weight of unrealistic timelines, resource shortages and hidden dependencies on foreign technology. Without strategic oversight, the rush to innovate will create new vulnerabilities, technical debt and missed objectives.



AI agent risk exposure

By 2029, underregulated AI agent interactions with citizens will be responsible for **20% of government service failures**, eroding public trust.



Digital sovereignty fragmentation

By 2028, **60% of government digital sovereignty initiatives** won't meet their objectives due to unrealistic timelines and investment estimations.



Architectural technical debt

By 2028, **75% of governments that don't implement vibe coding controls** will identify architectural technical debt as their biggest challenge.

Source: Gartner

3 essential questions for shaping your AI strategy

1 What should my AI investment strategy be?

2 What are the transformative AI use cases and opportunities?

3 How should we measure success along our AI journey?

What are the key stages?

This roadmap outlines five actionable steps public-sector organizations should take to develop an AI strategy that delivers measurable value. It highlights essential, proven practices that can help technology leaders define AI ambitions, prioritize high-impact use cases and ensure responsible, secure implementation.

Define AI ambitions



Prioritize AI use cases



Build strategy



Benchmark and communicate



Track and measure impact



Define AI ambitions

Key outcome: An actionable AI vision and clear leadership mandate to advance organizationwide AI strategy.

Actions to take:

Identify the organizational priorities where AI can deliver the greatest value.

Secure stakeholder buy-in and manage expectations for AI opportunities and risks.

Formulate and validate an AI vision with senior leadership to ensure it is actionable and relevant.

Sample of Gartner client resources include:

Insights

- [AI in Government: Eye on Innovation Awards for 2025 Use-Case Examples](#)

Toolkit

- [Workshop to Define Your Organization's AI Ambition](#)

Webinar

- [What Is Your Organization's AI Ambition?](#)

Define your AI ambitions with the [AI Opportunity Radar](#) ↗

Define AI ambitions

Prioritize AI use cases

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Prioritize AI use cases

Key outcome: A focused portfolio of AI use cases aligned with strategic priorities.

Actions to take:

Prioritize AI use cases based on organizational value, mission impact, feasibility and necessity.

Categorize use cases as defend, extend or upend. Balance your organization's AI investments by evaluating both efficiency gains and mission-driven outcomes.

Appoint an AI lead. Establish an AI lab to pilot prioritized use cases and achieve quick wins.

Sample of Gartner client resources include:

Insights

- [Generative AI Use-Case Assessment to Prioritize Public Safety Investments](#)

Case studies

- [Ignite Your AI Portfolio From Over 1,000+ Use Cases Across 60 Domains](#)

Tool

- [AI Use Cases to Drive Mission Impact](#)

Executive Partner consultation

Collaborate with your Executive Partner for their insights on experiences with other organizations and evaluate the cost-benefit potential of GenAI investments.

Discover 1,000+ proven AI use cases and case studies with [Gartner AI Use Case Insights](#) for faster, stronger results.

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Key outcome: An organizationwide AI strategy that ensures responsible use, effective governance and the capabilities needed for sustainable impact.

Actions to take:

Establish guardrails for AI trust, risk, security and sovereignty to promote responsible AI use.

Implement a robust AI governance framework and operating model across the organization, aligned with evolving national AI policies.

Identify and develop the roles, competencies and skills needed to deliver on your AI vision.

Sample of Gartner client resources include:

Analyst consultation

Work with a Gartner analyst to leverage their deep knowledge of public-sector AI priorities and proven best practices that can help you build your AI strategy.

Insights

- [What Public Sector Leaders Are Getting Wrong About AI \(And What They Must Do Now\)](#)

Insights

- [Implications of a National AI Policy on Government AI Adoption](#)

Roadmap

- [Accelerate AI Strategy for Government Department CIOs](#)

Tool

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

On-demand webinar: AI Literacy for Mission Success – Building an AI-Powered Government Workforce [↗](#)

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Key outcome: A clear understanding of organizational AI maturity that targets improvements and secures stakeholder support for the AI strategy.

Actions to take:

Define a framework to systematically measure AI maturity and run a baseline assessment to identify gaps between the current and target states.

Ensure data readiness. Engage internal and external stakeholders to align AI strategy with organizational objectives and government policies.

Communicate comprehensive AI strategy to your organization's leadership to gain approval and funding.

Sample of Gartner client resources include:

Board presentation

- [Resource Slides on Generative AI](#)

Insights

- [Drive Public Sector Data & Analytics Modernization in the Era of AI and Volatility](#)

Tool

- [Accelerator for AI-Ready Data](#)

[Toolkit: Gartner AI Maturity Model & Roadmap ↗](#)

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Benchmark and communicate



Track and measure impact



Track and measure impact

Key outcome: Clear measurement of AI benefits and risks to guide ongoing improvements and effective scaling.

Actions to take:

Identify metrics and KPIs that matter to internal and external stakeholders.

Set up processes and feedback mechanisms to monitor these metrics and assess the impact of AI initiatives.

Schedule regular meetings with stakeholders to report progress and ensure strategic alignment.

Sample of Gartner client resources include:

Insights

- [6 Tactics for Governments to Impact Mission and Cut Costs With GenAI](#)

Insights

- [A Journey Guide to Manage AI Governance, Trust, Risk and Security](#)

Toolkit

- [AI and GenAI Cost Calculator](#)

[Conference: Attend Gartner Data & Analytics Summit](#) ↗

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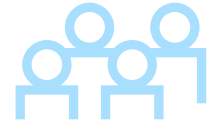
Benchmark and communicate



Track and measure impact

Who needs to be involved?

The most successful government organizations establish cross-functional teams for their AI initiatives. We've outlined the recommended functions and roles to include to ensure the best chance of success.



CIO/Head of Technology

Sets a clear enterprisewide AI ambition, identifies use cases, quantifies benefits and risks, aligns teams and competencies, and drives innovation across the organization.

Head of AI

Develops, champions and executes the organization's AI strategy by overseeing AI use case selection and scaling, establishing governance and literacy, implementing solutions, monitoring market trends, building a world-class team and reporting on business impact.

Chief Data and Analytics Officer and Team

Lead the organization's AI data strategy by identifying use cases, establishing governance, developing new data value and ensuring data readiness for AI technologies.

Chief Information Security Officer and Team

Integrate cybersecurity and data privacy into AI strategy by managing trust, risk, sovereignty and security; overseeing programs; anticipating threats; updating skills; and designing resilient solutions.

Chief Human Resources Officer and Team

Ensure AI success by upskilling employees, fostering change readiness, promoting ethical adoption and engaging the entire organization.

Head of Enterprise Architecture and Team

Align AI structure and design with organizational value by guiding use cases and requirements, governing architecture investments, leading adoption decisions and architecting AI solutions.

Software Engineering Leader and Team

Drive AI integration by clarifying desired outcomes, establishing engineering best practices, transforming services with an AI-first approach and architecting software development to support AI objectives.

Client Story

Transforming public services with AI: Municipality of Cagliari's (Italy) success story

Mission-critical priority

The Municipality of Cagliari needed to modernize its cloud infrastructure and harness AI to deliver more personalized and efficient services for citizens and local businesses, while strengthening cybersecurity and supporting smart city initiatives.



How Gartner helped

Gartner provided strategic guidance and AI frameworks that helped Cagliari design and deploy tailored AI solutions. This included aligning technology strategies with best practices and supporting the integration of data analytics to meet evolving public-sector needs.



Mission accomplished





With Gartner support, Cagliari successfully adopted AI and data analytics, resulting in a **70% increase in operational efficiency, reduced redundancies, and higher satisfaction among citizens and organizations.**

[Watch the full story ↗](#)



Actionable, objective decision intelligence

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

<p>eBook </p> <p>Improve Government Efficiency and Effectiveness With AI, Data and Analytics</p> <p>Overcome modernization barriers and unlock value in your government organization.</p> <p>Download eBook</p>	<p>eBook </p> <p>A Government CIO's Efficiency Toolkit</p> <p>Learn how government CIOs can drive efficiency, modernize IT and deliver measurable outcomes.</p> <p>Download eBook</p>	<p>On-Demand Webinar </p> <p>AI Literacy for Mission Success: Building an AI-Powered Government Workforce</p> <p>Learn what AI literacy means and why building an AI-powered workforce is key to keeping pace with market trends.</p> <p>Watch Now</p>	<p>Tool </p> <p>Accelerators for Government CIOs</p> <p>Explore our step-by-step tools and diagnostics tailored specifically for government CIOs.</p> <p>Learn More</p>
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