

# How Government Fit Use AI

Four Actions Wey Go Build Transformative and Resilient Public Administration

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## The Rise of AI for Government Action

Artificial Intelligence (AI) don dey change how government dey work, and e no just affect how fast dem dey do work, e still dey affect how dem dey respond to people and how their decisions dey make sense. Today, about 70% of countries talk say dem dey use AI to improve how things dey run inside government, while about one-third of them dey use am to help design policy and carry am out.<sup>1</sup>

For example, di federal government of Canada use one AI platform translate and summarize about 11,000 submissions wey dem collect during their public consultation take update their AI strategy;<sup>2</sup> Singapore sef don create and deploy AI chatbot wey dem dey use across different public services to make service delivery faster and better;<sup>3</sup> for Peru, their water regulator dey use AI estimate how much investment dem need for the country water sector.<sup>4</sup> Some governments don even dey too excited about AI reach point wey dem dey think say maybe dem fit use am not just as support tool, but even replace some main government work.<sup>5</sup>

We need to balance ambition with reality: the benefits wey people dey expect from AI go only show if governments set realistic goals and plan every step of how dem wan use AI well, as statistics show say “more than 80% of AI projects dey fail, and this one na double the failure rate of projects wey no involve AI.”<sup>6</sup> For example, for Michigan, AI wrongly accuse almost 40,000 people say dem collect unemployment benefits wey no belong to them,<sup>7</sup> while for South Korea, dem stop one learning program after dem discover say AI-powered textbooks get wrong information and still pose risk to people data privacy.<sup>8</sup>

## Key Takeaways

- AI no be shortcut to reform government. If dem never first redesign institutions, build enough capacity, and set clear governance, using AI fit even make bureaucratic wahala worse. Bias, confusion, and lack of transparency go dey instead of improving performance or fairness.
- Whether AI go succeed for government na governance matter, no be just technical one. Di result no depend too much on how advanced the technology dey, but on how strong institutions be, how accountability systems dey work, how dem dey share power between government and vendors, and how well dem plan for resilience.
- We recommend four actions: make government redesign public services around real problems before dem deploy AI; invest for institutional capacity through training and cross-functional teams; rebalance power wit vendors through collective procurement and collaboration; and ground public-sector AI for one “Trust Stack” wey dem build on transparency, accountability, oversight, and resilience.

Dis no mean say governments suppose stop to experiment with or deploy AI. If dem wait until dem remove every risk wey get to do with AI before dem act, na mistake and e sef get im own risk. If leaders for public sector no start now to use AI take improve how government dey work, the gap between how private sector and government dey adopt technology go just widen more, and this go further weaken the already fragile trust wey people get for how effective and relevant government institutions be.

Governments need to act now – start their AI journey and face di institutional and capacity gaps wey dey stop di technology from being used di wey dem suppose use am – responsibly.

***“No be only during election people dey experience democracy; e still dey show for how dem dey interact with public services. If dat interaction dey responsive, respectful, appropriate, transparent and empowering, e go help improve how people see government and the trust wey dem get for di institutions go increase.”<sup>9</sup>***

## Challenge 1 AI fit amplify Government dysfunction

Di problems wey governments dey face today no be new tin; na di long-standing weaknesses wey people don already identify since modern bureaucracy start cause am. Originally, bureaucracy suppose be organised system wey go ensure fairness, predictability, and equal treatment under di law. But many times, e dey cause problems wey dey reduce trust wey people get for public institutions. Rules wey no give room for bias and structured procedures dey overshadow purpose, den processes wey dey slow and disconnected fit undermine administrative effectiveness.

In theory, AI fit help governments solve these problems by supporting redesign of existing strategies and processes. But di risk be say governments fit miss dis opportunity if dem use AI mainly to just speed up how

dem dey do tins already instead of improving dem. If dem encode legacy rules, fragmented

workflows, and outdated administrative logic into new AI systems, governments go just automate and even make di current problems worse. Without proper changes and precautions, these systems fit make decisions harder to understand or even create more unfairness instead of removing dem. Na di same way, AI no go fit deliver di benefits wey people expect if government decisions dey based on which tools dey available or popular – like chatbots – instead of focusing on di real needs of citizens. AI-driven projects – even till 2026 – still dey risk reinforcing existing government weaknesses and exposing di limits of administrative capacity.<sup>10</sup>

## Action 1 Shift go problem-driven, bottom-up approach for AI

Before governments deploy AI, dem need make am clear di kind value wey dem expect AI projects to create. Any initiative must show real value for individuals, public servants, and di organisation.<sup>11</sup> **Dis mean say governments need to clearly identify di real needs of people wey di project wan solve** (for example, faster decisions or more consistent rulings), check whether di resources wey dem get fit meet those needs, and set clear, measurable indicators wey go help them track real impact over time. Processes suppose only consider automation after dem don redesign dem well to align with public values. Na dis approach di United Kingdom follow: instead of rushing to deploy technology, dem first redesign services based on clearly identified user needs before introducing any automated solution.<sup>12</sup>

***Before any government start dia AI journey, dem suppose tackle di major challenges wey dey stop dem from using AI in a transformative way – wey go make use of public services easier for people, reduce administrative stress, improve coordination, strengthen accountability, and lead to fairer outcomes.***

To make this vision reality, governments should move away from top-down way of rolling out technology and work closely with both end users and public servants, to make sure they deploy AI where they go bring the most value. **They should engage public servants as co-designers** (instead of ordinary users) and also engage them throughout the process, from defining the problem and identifying what success would look like – go through testing early versions for real service environments and improving both the tools and the processes over time. Their experience and knowledge matter – including the informal ways they do take solve problems when official procedures do not work or too slow. This is one they should guide AI projects from beginning to end.

**Implementation should start with small, well-defined projects they get clear goals**, with strong monitoring to track how they affect service quality, workload, fairness, and other outcomes. Governments should then build on what works – scale up successful solutions, drop the ones they do not work, and use lessons they learn to support wider adoption and deployment across different programmes and agencies.

Denmark is a good example of this step-by-step approach, as they use regulatory sandboxes and phased rollout to deploy AI.<sup>13</sup>

## Challenge 2 Governments do not get enough institutional capacity to implement AI

Governments they face serious structural and capacity challenges they limit how they can govern AI effectively. Even though the problems they need to solve now they are more interconnected, they still they work in silos, rely on scattered data systems, and operate under rigid legal frameworks they make coordination across ministries and agencies difficult. All this complexity they slow down decision-making and reduce how governments they respond in a joined-up, whole-of-government way.

For operational level, access to services require many interactions for different institutions. Old systems do not share data or support proactive service delivery, and the quality of decisions they suffer because overworked

staff they operate with inconsistent rules and limited real-time information. Governments they face growing gap for digital skills, both among leaders they they make strategic decisions and staff they they operate AI systems.<sup>14</sup> This is strong competition for AI talent they favour private sector, where salary, flexibility, and career growth better pass. As a result, knowledge they concentrate more with vendors instead of inside government they, and this one they create dependence they they weaken public oversight.

## Action 2 Build capacity with training and cross-functional AI support team

Governments do only succeed to maximise the positive impact of AI and reduce the risks if they make sure they their leaders, workers, and institutions get the full capacity to use AI for effective and responsible way.

First, **governments should train public servants to be able to work productively with AI tools.**

Even though many training programmes they focus on AI ethics, workers still need the practical skills and confidence to use AI properly for their daily work – like understanding how the system they work in different situations, and when they fail, and what to do if problems come up. Governments also need to put in place targeted and sustained measures they go help public servants build the skills they only humans they fit handle – like understanding complex individual cases, to balance different interests and to make sure they decisions they AI support they fair.

*[ . . . ]. To take full advantage of machine learning applications, you need to upgrade your workers' skills [ . . . ]. When machine can detect fraud or predict customer or employee churn with about 90% accuracy, no one can handle the remaining 10% and that one can be the most difficult part 10%.”<sup>15</sup>*

Secondly, **each government should consider the creation of cross-functional AI support team** to help public institutions adopt AI in a safe, effective,

and mission-driven way. The work of this team goes to support ministries and agencies throughout the full AI lifecycle – from identifying high-value use cases and redesigning workflows before automation, to selecting and integrating the right tools and to make sure they follow legal and security requirements.

The main responsibilities of the team include: checking whether projects fit work and the risks they are involved; setting common standards for data quality, model governance, and documentation; running pilot projects and sandboxes; and stepping in when AI systems need adjustment or they need to be withdrawn.

The team composition should reflect this wide responsibility by bringing together experts from different areas – technical, legal, policy, service design, and change management – including people who understand public law, human-centred design, facilitation, and frontline service delivery.

## Challenge 3 Governments they face major power imbalances

The high concentration of AI development has shifted the balance of power between governments and the private sector, and this in turn challenges sovereignty and democratic control. AI vendors are mostly a small group of companies from America and China, not just control access to the technology, they also control information, contract terms, and how operations they run. This in turn makes governments depend on them for key things like computing power, cloud infrastructure, large language models, and the expertise they need to deploy AI tools inside ministries and agencies.<sup>16</sup>

This dependence is not a small inconvenience – it can turn into serious political risk. Most times, governments do not get access to proper documentation, audit trails or clear explanation of how the models they behave, so they depend on vendors to assess AI systems they affect people's rights and entitlements. When a public institution cannot inspect the tools they use to decide who qualifies for welfare or when confidentiality clauses block proper checking of predictive policing tools, government officials are basically governing in the dark. Procurement itself makes these power imbalances worse.

Many governments do not get enough bargaining power to negotiate audit rights, demand transparency or avoid vendor lock-in and this in turn makes long-term dependence become the normal thing. This pressure affects smaller countries too, because they do not have strong regulatory capacity and they do not really get a voice for international spaces where they set standards. As global companies they decide the terms for accessing advanced AI systems, governments they risk turning into rule-takers for areas they are very important for national governance. If they do not deliberately plan how to take back control, the same tools they adopt to strengthen public administration will, with time, weaken their ability to govern properly.

## Action 3 Take back public power through collaboration and technology resilience

To regain strategic control over how they use AI for public administration, governments should first move away from buying things on their own and start to work together in a coordinated way. **Collective procurement alliances**, like the joint negotiations for vaccines,<sup>17</sup> go to allow governments combine their demand and expertise. This kind of collective power goes to help governments get things they do not fit get on their own – like proper audit rights, transparency into training data, clear documentation of how models they behave and assurance that data fit move easily across systems. When several governments come together to negotiate with one vendor, something they look like “non-standard” before it becomes normal expectation.

Public institutions should also **work together, both within and across countries to create and share AI tools, models, licensing templates, security guidelines, legal and governance knowledge, and evaluation reports**. This kind of approach (especially collaboration between Global South countries and Majority-World partnerships to build joint or regional support teams) goes to allow them reuse and adapt trusted technologies instead of always depending on private, proprietary systems. Shared public digital infrastructure will reduce how much governments depend on external providers. For example, X-Road – one system they Estonia lead – allows public institutions and approved providers to communicate through standardised, decentralised databases instead of private platforms, and about 20 countries they use it now, including Finland, Ukraine and Japan.<sup>18</sup>

To (re)assert public control over AI no mean say governments must build or run all digital systems by demselves. If government try depend only on its own systems, e dey come with him own risks – like slower innovation, limited access to advanced tools, and new weak points wey fit cause failure inside government systems. Instead, resilience **mean say no single technology, vendor, or institutional model go dey indispensable.**

Governments need to strike balance by combining public digital infrastructure with private-sector capabilities, using different suppliers, avoiding dependence on one platform and making sure say systems fit work together and data fit move easily across them. Na so India take do am – dem build public digital infrastructure wey government dey control but dem still work with major tech companies through controlled private-cloud arrangements.

*Di main question for governments no be weda dem go depend on di market or build everything by diaself but how dem go manage dis mixed (hybrid) arrangement in a way wey go maintain resilience, ensure accountability, and keep long-term control.*

## Challenge 4 Accountability gaps dey reduce trust in public institutions

Many times, governments dey deploy AI without putting the proper systems in place to sustain political legitimacy and public trust for institutions. Dis fit include situations where dem introduce AI systems without public discussion or legal approval, and di affected communities no dey involved in di design and no even know say the technology dey in use. Clear rules for transparency, accountability, and liability dey important to protect all these things.

Many of the AI systems wey governments dey use still dey operate like “black boxes,” meaning say even individuals and public servants no really understand how dem dey make decisions or predictions. Inside government, public servants fit begin rely too much on AI-supported decisions without clear guidelines or responsibility frameworks,

which fit lead to overdependence on machine advice without proper human judgement, and weaken respect for existing rules and legal safeguards. For example, for about 95% of cases, Spanish police dey follow the risk score wey their algorithm produce for gender-based violence, instead of using am as just one of several inputs.<sup>19</sup>

Dis one na serious problem because people hardly get proper way to challenge decisions wey AI support and wey affect dia lives. In fact, na only about 35 countries get systems wey dey allow people seek redress or remedy when government AI systems affect dem negatively.<sup>20</sup> Worse still, many people around the world no even get basic knowledge to know when AI dey involved in a decision, not to talk of understanding am, questioning am, or challenging the outcome. For countries like South Africa, where about two-thirds of people neva hear about AI or no really understand wetin e be and how e fit affect their lives,<sup>21</sup> e go hard for people to question AI assisted-decisions.

*According to one UN survey, less than half of di countries wey respond don update dia laws or regulations to guide di ethical and responsible use of AI for public administration.<sup>22</sup>*

## Action 4 Build a public-sector Trust Stack for AI

Instead of depending on isolated safeguards, governments suppose create one public-sector “Trust Stack” for AI to strengthen public oversight of AI systems and, by extension, build trust among individuals and public servants.

Importantly, this Trust Stack no suppose stand outside existing legal systems. E must dey grounded inside administrative law, flexible procurement rules, and new AI-specific regulations wey already give governments tools to properly govern how dem dey use AI for public sector. First, **trust need information to reinforce transparency** by making AI use visible, easy to understand and open for public scrutiny. Canada don show say governments fit lead by example by making AI registers compulsory – public databases wey list all government AI systems wey dey in use, wetin dem dey use dem for, di data wey dem rely on and dia known limitations.<sup>23</sup>

Public institutions suppose also carry out Algorithmic Impact Assessment before dem deploy any AI tool and dem must make di results of dis assessment open to the public. Clear labelling also dey important to let people know when dem dey use AI to deliver public services, and to explain clearly how di system dey work. **Trust dey also rely on conflict resolution mechanisms** to resolve issues – mechanisms wey go clearly assign responsibility and liability when AI dey in use and make sure say dem promote accountability. Following the example of France, governments suppose create (or improve) systems like AI ombudsperson or dedicated helpdesk where people fit submit complaints and seek redress.<sup>24</sup> Following di example of di German state of Schleswig-Holstein, dem fit even go further by creating formal “AI objection” system wey go allow di review of any automated decision by human decision-maker without putting the person wey complain at any disadvantage.<sup>25</sup> Alongside these safeguards, governments must show clear commitment to accountability for any decision or service wey involve AI – just like South Korea don do by clearly defining responsibility frameworks for agencies and public servants.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, **trust go dey sustained through oversight by multi-stakeholder mechanisms** wey include groups wey include people from civil society, academia, industry and labour unions – wey get balanced representation and responsibility to continuously monitor, evaluate, and improve how AI systems dey used. To support dis oversight system, governments suppose also ensure strong protection for whistle blowers and public-interest security researchers wey fit expose system failures or ethical problems.

## A public-sector Trust Stack for AI



### Information Layer

Transparency and public awareness

Clear labelling, AI registers, and impact assessments.



### Conflict Resolution Layer

Contestability and effective remedies

Mechanisms for redress, right to challenge decisions, and legal accountability.



### Oversight Layer

Continuous, collective, and independent oversight

Multistakeholder monitoring of public-sector AI & protections for whistleblowers.

## Design for failure: make AI resilience dey practical

Technological failures fit cause key services to stop and disrupt supply chains, leading to wider problems. For example, for 2024, one faulty update from cybersecurity company CrowdStrike crash about 8.5 million Windows systems worldwide, e affect hospitals, emergency services, and government agencies.<sup>27</sup> For 2025, one fire for Korea National Information Resources Service shut down about 647 government systems and leave citizens without access to essential services for weeks.<sup>28</sup> Since failures no dey avoidable, di main challenge for governments na resilience – that is, dia ability to absorb shocks and recover quickly when things go wrong. But short political timelines dey often focus more on visible upgrades pass proper preparedness, leaving recovery plans unfinished or without being tested.

Also, many governments dey depend on just a few cloud providers, data centres, or AI systems, which mean say one cyberattack or natural disaster fit shut everything down. To avoid systemic crises, **governments need to treat resilience as a core capability – this include putting fallback systems in place and regularly stress-testing of dia infrastructure.**

## Start Small. Scale Up. Dey Resilient.

Since AI dey mostly amplify wetin already exist, governments need strong and solid foundations to support how dem go adopt am in a transformative way.

AI go only deliver real public value when e dey grounded in solving clearly defined problems of end users, built inside well-redesigned systems, handled by capable workers and teams, with support through collaboration, and transparent governance by public authority. If government deploy am inside systems wey

no get coordinated processes, underinvestment in people and resilience, weak coordination and limited accountability, AI no go fix di problems - e go only make them worse.

To avoid failure, governments must resist di temptation to replace institutional capacity and human judgement with AI. Instead, make dem use AI take strengthen and improve those systems. Going slow and steady with ambition from di beginning no be sign of weakness or indecision. Na sign of seriousness and responsibility. Well-designed pilot projects, step-by-step deployment and careful planning for worst-case scenarios - na the only reliable way to learn, show real public value and adjust direction before any harm from AI begin scale up. E still no clear whether AI go completely transform governments, or if e go remain as powerful but limited technology wey di long-term impact fit still disappoint. But one thing sure: accountability na the price wey government must pay to use AI for the public sector. Without proper planning and execution, governments fit find diaself dey manage technology wey dem no fit control properly, while the trust wey people get for government go continue to drop.

## Notes

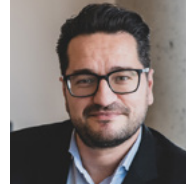
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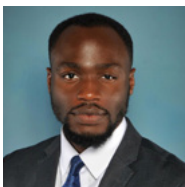
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# Di Global Policy Briefs on AI

Di Global Policy Briefs on AI initiative na joint effort between IVADO Canada leading AI research and knowledge mobilisation consortium for Université de Montréal and di AI + Society Initiative for the University of Ottawa. Di aim of dis initiative na to provide policymakers with strong, practical policy recommendations wey fit help address major global challenges wey relate to AI.

After the first phase wey focus on di impact of AI on democracy and electoral integrity, di initiative organise second policy retreat wey focus on how to use AI for government. As public sector use of AI don increase around the world, governments dey face growing challenges around procurement, implementation, transparency, accountability, risk management, and how to reduce bias. Di retreat address these issues by developing practical guidance for responsible procurement and deployment of AI systems for public administration, to make sure say these technologies truly serve public interest.

Dis policy brief na work wey dem develop during one retreat wey Professors Catherine Régis and Florian Martin-Bariteau organise, wey bring togeda leading AI experts from different parts of di world. Di retreat happen for Società Italiana per l'Organizzazione Internazionale (SIOI) for Rome, Italy, for December 2025. Dem write di brief with support from Halima Bachir, Antoine Congost, and Réjean Roy from IVADO Knowledge Mobilization team.

Dis project happen through contributions from CEIMIA, di Canada CIFAR Chair in AI and Human Rights for Mila, and di University of Ottawa Research Chair for Technology and Society. Dem also get additional support from di Délégation du Québec à Rome and SIOI to organise di retreat.

Translation into Pidgin: Toronto Metropolitan University.

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*Di views wey dey dis policy brief na those of di authors.*

*Dem use artificial intelligence tools only for editorial purposes, like language correction and rephrasing.*

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