Artificial Intelligence Policy and Implementation Plan

(Second Draft)

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1. GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

1.1 GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Access Control	Role-based access to datasets to minimize the possibility of combining sensitive information.
Algorithmic Bias	Systematic errors in AI systems that result in unfair outcomes, often disadvantaging certain groups.
Artificial Intelligence	A machine-based system that can, for a given set of human-defined objectives, observe its environment and make predictions, recommendations, or decisions influencing real or virtual environments.
Data Governance	The use of digital technologies to improve public service delivery, enhance transparency and accountability, and promote citizen engagement. It encompasses the policies, regulations, and practices that guide the use of digital technologies in the public sector.
Data management	Practices, procedures, and technologies used to collect, store, process, protect, and archive data throughout its lifecycle.
Data Minimization	Limited collection and sharing of data to only what is strictly necessary.
Differential Privacy	Privacy-preserving techniques that add noise to data to prevent re-identification.
Digital Infrastructure	Physical and virtual technologies, such as high-speed internet, cloud computing, and data centres, that support digital and AI innovations.
Digital Sovereignty	The ability of a nation to control its digital assets, data, and infrastructure without external dependence.
Digital Transformation	The integration of digital technologies across sectors to improve processes, services, and outcomes.
Ethics Committee	A body tasked with ensuring AI deployments adhere to principles of fairness, transparency, accountability, and human rights.
Explainability	The ability of AI systems to provide clear and understandable explanations of their decisions or outputs.
Federated Learning	Analysis of distributed datasets without aggregating them centrally, reducing exposure risks.
Frugal Innovation	Frugal innovation focuses on creating simple, affordable, and effective solutions that meet essential needs with limited resources.
General-Purpose Artificial Intelligence	Broad AI systems, such as large language models, designed for a wide range of applications and tasks.
Green AI Initiatives	Efforts to develop and deploy energy-efficient AI technologies that minimize environmental impact.

Natural Language Processing	The application of computational techniques to the analysis and synthesis of natural language and speech.
Open Data Policies	Guidelines promoting the sharing and accessibility of anonymized datasets for AI research and development while maintaining privacy.
Parastatals	A company or organisation which is owned by a country's government
Regulatory Sandbox	A controlled environment where AI innovations can be tested under relaxed regulations to foster experimentation while managing risks.
Risk-based Framework	A regulatory approach categorizing AI systems by risk levels (e.g., minimal, limited, high, or unacceptable) to apply appropriate governance.
Smart Government	A government model that leverages AI to enhance service delivery, decision-making, and resource management.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	A collection of global goals set by the United Nations, aiming to address issues like poverty, health, education, and climate action, where AI can play a significant role.
Synthetic Data	Artificial datasets that mimic the statistical properties of the original data but contain no real-world information.
Triple Helix Model	A collaborative framework involving academia, industry, and government to foster innovation and co-create policies.

1.2 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Definition
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AU	African Union
CPA	Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action
DSA	Digital Services Act
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GovTech	Government Technology (as a dedicated laboratory or Initiative)
GPAI	General-Purpose Artificial Intelligence
HPC	High-Performance Computing
LAST	Lesotho Academy of Science and Technology
MICSTI	The Ministry of Information, Communication, Science, Technology and Innovation
NLP	Natural Language Processing
NRD	Norway Registers Development AS
NUL	National University of Lesotho
OACPS	Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STISA 2024	Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024
UNDP	United Nations Cooperation Programme

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Draft Artificial Intelligence Policy (hereinafter, the "Policy") has been developed as an output under the Project titled "The Development of Policy Frameworks (Broadband and Shared Infrastructure Policy; Data Management Policy; Artificial Intelligence Policy) for Digital Governance and Digital Enabling Environment in Lesotho" (hereinafter, the "Project") implemented by Norway Registers Development AS (NRD) for the United Nations Development Cooperation Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation (MICSTI) of Lesotho.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly prevalent worldwide, offering significant opportunities for economic and social development. However, it also presents certain risks due to its non-deterministic and unpredictable nature. Therefore, timely regulations and support for AI development are crucial for Lesotho to harness the benefits of AI while mitigating potential risks.

Lesotho is already addressing various AI-related issues through its National Digital Transformation Strategy and National Digital Policy. However, formal AI legislation is not yet available, necessitating a more systematic approach to AI governance.

The Government of Lesotho aims to ensure responsible development, deployment, and usage of AI across the country to improve overall quality of life. Thus, the purpose of this policy is to establish a robust governance structure to guide the ethical and responsible adoption of AI in Lesotho. Key focus areas of the policy include:

1. **Establishing leadership and governance**: creation of a sustainable and efficient AI domain governance setup, including an AI policy maker, regulator, and a Data and AI Committee
2. **Developing legislation and ensuring compliance:** establishment of a legal and regulatory environment that enables AI development and compliance
3. **Building AI capacity:** supporting AI capacity building across the public sector and society through training programs, education support, and public awareness campaigns
4. **Building and providing AI infrastructure**: improving infrastructure and technology access, including high-speed internet, data centers, and computational resources
5. **Leveraging AI to boost productivity, diversify the economy, and create high-value jobs:** supporting businesses and academia in implementing AI-driven solutions, while facilitating the establishment of Research and Development hubs and innovation labs
6. **Ensuring inclusiveness and ethical usage of AI:** development and enforcement of ethics and human rights safeguards, AI safety protocols, and bias mitigation programs
7. **Promoting international alignment and sustainability: aligning Lesotho with global standards, participation in international AI policy discussions, and collaboration with regional and global AI initiatives**

The policy outlines an implementation plan and monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure the effective execution of AI initiatives and continuous improvement, with an expectation to position Lesotho as a regional leader in AI development while aligning with global standards and best practices.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 BACKGROUND

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming omnipresent worldwide. It is a topic of hot discussion in all imaginable contexts. However, it includes certain non-determinism and unpredictability intrinsically.

Moreover, AI, by its nature, enables automation by mimicking human cognitive functions such as decision-making, learning, and problem-solving. Whilst automation means a boost in economic and social development, in combination with non-determinism and certain unpredictability it means certain risks as well.

Hence, both, timely regulations and support for AI development could mean, either, being among leaders and collecting long-hanging fruits of prosperity or being left behind in the AI race.

3.2 POLICY RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

Developing a National AI Policy is a strategic objective of the Kingdom of Lesotho. It is required to ensure **responsible development, deployment, and usage of AI across the country to improve overall quality of life**. Thus, the purpose of this policy is **to establish a robust governance structure to guide the ethical and responsible adoption of AI in Lesotho.**

Lesotho would greatly benefit from the development of a comprehensive AI policy for the following reasons:

1. **Economic Development and Innovation**
    1.1. **Diversifying the Economy:** today's Lesotho relies on sectors like agriculture (e.g., precision agriculture, optimal planning of resources), and manufacturing (especially textiles, e.g. optimal resources planning, smart marketing). By embracing AI Lesotho could diversify its economy and foster new sectors such as tech innovation, software development, and data services.
    1.2. **Job Creation:** AI can create high-value jobs in data science, machine learning, and automation. These could supplement traditional sectors and stimulate economic growth.
    1.3. **Improving Productivity:** AI-driven technologies would improve productivity in agriculture, manufacturing, and services. For example, AI could help optimize crop yields or improve supply chain management for manufacturers. E.g. in case the case of **smart agriculture,** AI can assist farmers with weather predictions, pest control, and soil quality analysis, which would be particularly beneficial in Lesotho's agricultural sector.
2. **Research, Education and Skills Development**
    2.1. **Building Local Expertise:** A national AI policy is a guide for the development of local talent in the fields of AI and its application across all fields. By promoting AI education and training programs, Lesotho will ensure that its workforce is prepared for the technological changes ahead.
    2.2. **Research and Collaboration:** AI policy could foster collaboration with universities, research institutions, industry, government, and international partners to drive research and development in AI.
3. **Social Development and Public Services**
    3.1. **Improved Healthcare:** AI allows improving healthcare services, from diagnostic tools to predictive analytics for disease outbreaks. A policy would promote the use of AI in Lesotho's healthcare system, addressing challenges like access to care in remote areas.

3.2. **Public Sector Efficiency:** AI could streamline government operations, improve accountability, and improve public service delivery, enhancing governance and trust in state institutions.

3.3. **Mitigating Potential Disruptions:** While AI presents numerous opportunities, it also brings risks like job displacement due to automation. A well-designed AI policy can help address these challenges by supporting workforce transition programs, retraining, and other measures to mitigate the negative effects on workers, and instead, improve their productivity and competencies.

3.4. **Inclusivity:** proper usage of AI could increase the inclusivity of minorities and individuals with disabilities by providing various tools to tackle the issue, such as speech-to-text, text-to-speech, sign language interpretation, and machine translation. Moreover, AI can provide personalized education for challenged children. AI can help to identify and mitigate bias and discrimination.

4. **Ethics and Data Privacy**

4.1. **Ensuring Ethical Usage of AI:** A national AI policy establishes guidelines to ensure responsible usage of AI systems, including transparency, fairness, and accountability in AI algorithms, avoiding discrimination, and protecting citizens' privacy.

4.2. **Development of other policies.** A national AI policy requires the development of related digital policies, such as **Data Governance** policy, **Internet Governance** policy, **Digital Transformation** policy, etc. However, **Data Governance** is a must**,** because AI relies on access to data, and the policy establishing clear regulations around data collection, sharing, and usage is critical to protect individuals' privacy and rights is necessary.

4.3. **Restricting research, development, and usage of AI for malicious purposes.** A national policy should restrict usage of the AI for any illegal activities, terrorism, cybercrime, and other type of misuse, threat, or exploitation.

5. **Global Competitiveness and Strategic Positioning**

5.1. **Aligning with Global Trends:** As AI becomes a global driving force in innovation, Lesotho could risk being left behind if it does not develop a strategic policy framework. A well-articulated AI policy can position Lesotho as an emerging player in the AI landscape, attracting foreign investment and fostering international partnerships.

5.2. **Regulatory Alignment:** Many countries are already creating AI regulations, and Lesotho would benefit from aligning its policy with international best practices, ensuring that its AI initiatives are compatible with global standards.

5.3. **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. **Supporting SDGs with AI:** Lesotho, as a member of the United Nations, is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). AI could contribute to achieving several of these goals, such as improving health (SDG 3), ensuring quality education (SDG 4), advancing economic growth (SDG 8), and promoting climate action (SDG 13). A national AI policy would help integrate AI technologies into Lesotho's efforts to meet these goals.

6. **Digital Infrastructure Development:** Lesotho would need to invest in the necessary infrastructure for AI, including internet connectivity, cloud computing, and data centres. An AI policy would initiate the country's plans to build the digital infrastructure necessary to support digital and AI innovation.

A national AI policy for Lesotho is essential to ensure that AI technologies are used in ways that promote economic growth, improve public services, and address the unique challenges the country faces. By creating a clear framework, Lesotho can harness the transformative power of AI while safeguarding its citizens' interests and positioning itself as a competitive player in the global digital economy.

Thus, through this Policy, the Government of Lesotho seeks to:

1. Foster innovation, economic growth, and job creation.
2. Enhance public service delivery and governance efficiency.
3. Mitigate potential risks such as bias, data privacy violations, and job displacement due to automation.
4. Position Lesotho as a regional leader in AI development while aligning with global standards and best practices.

4. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Different regional bodies and countries from the region are already active in defining their AI policies and strategies:

1. Regional document defining AI strategy for the African Union, namely *Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy by African Union*[1];
2. *South Africa National AI Policy Framework*[2], the background for the AI policy;
3. The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030)[3];
4. The Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA 2024)[4];
5. The African Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA)[5];
6. The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa 2020-2030[6];
7. The Computer Crime and Cybersecurity Bill[7];
8. The Data Protection Act[8].

Lesotho is already addressing different issues related to AI, namely:

1. Lesotho's National Digital Transformation Strategy Agenda 2030[9] mentions AI several times;
2. Lesotho's National Digital Policy 2024[10];
3. Lesotho Academy of Science and Technology (LAST) together with Botho University and Indaba Deep Learning is planning a science festival "Embracing Applications of AI" (November 25, 2025), which involves topics such as AI for the Sustainable Development, AI startups, Policy, and governance. The goal of the event is to inspire AI-driven entrepreneurship, educate people on responsible AI policies, and explore sustainable applications of AI in Lesotho;
4. Research related to the usage of AI in universities in Lesotho is performed[11];
5. In different events, such as the 2024 Digital Innovators Summit[12];
6. Selected hospitals experiment with using AI to improve medical processes[13];
7. Studies:

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[1] H. Abou-Zeid, K. Kazaura, W. Hamdi and S. Amazouz, "Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy," The African Union, 2024 // https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/44004-doc-EN-_Continental_AI_Strategy_July_2024.pdf.
[2] Department Communications & Digital Technologies, Republic of South Africa, South Africa National Artificial Intelligence Policy Framework, 2024 // https://fwblaw.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/South-Africa-National-AI-Policy-Framework-1.pdf.
[3] African Union, "Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030)," Bureau of the Chairperson, 2024 // https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/38507-doc-dts-english.pdf.
[4] African Union, "Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA 2024)," 2024 // https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/33178-wd-stisa-english_-_final.pdf.
[5] NEPAD Office of Science and Technology, "African Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action," 2006.
[6] Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, "Digital Transformation Strategy (edition 2023)," 2023 // https://dalagroup.africa/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Africa-CDC-Digital-Transformation-Strategy-Edition-2023-VF.pdf.
[7] The Parliament of Lesotho, "Computer Crime and Cybersecurity Bill," 2024 // https://nationalassembly.parliament.ls/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/COMPUTER-CRIME-AND-CYBER-SECURITY-BILL-2024.pdf.
[8] Data Protection Act, 2011 // https://www.centralbank.org.ls/images/Legislation/Principal/Data_Protection_Act_2011.pdf.
[9] "Lesotho's National Digital Transformation Strategy: Agenda 2030," 2024.
[10] Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation, "National Digital Policy 2024," 2024.
[11] M. A. Ayanwale, "Evidence from Lesotho Secondary Schools on Students' Intention to Engage in Artificial Intelligence Learning," in IEEE AFRICON, Nairobi, Kenya, 2023 // https://www.researchgate.net/publication/375128417_Evidence_from_Lesotho_Secondary_Schools_on_Students'_Intention_to_Engage_in_Artificial_Intelligence_Learning.
[12] B. Bulane, "Promoting digital literacy in Lesotho," The Reporter, p. 1, 16 September 2024 // https://www.thereporter.co.ls/2024/09/16/promoting-digital-literacy-in-lesotho//.
[13] N. Glaser, S. Bosman, T. Madonsela, A. van Heerden, K. Mashaete, B. Katende, I. Ayakaka, K. Murphy, A. Signorell, L. Lynen and e. al., "Incidental radiological findings during clinical tuberculosis screening in Lesotho and South Africa: a case series," Journal of Medical Case Reports, vol. 17:365, 2023 // https://jmedicalcasereports.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13256-023-04097-4/

7.1. Bachelor of Science in Data Science is taught at Botho University[14] (https://botswana.bothouniversity.com/courses/bsc-in-data-science/)

7.2. Bachelor Of Science in Computer Science at the National University of Lesotho covers selected AI topics (https://www.nul.ls/technology/programmes)

7.3. AI topics are discussed in related study programs at Lesotho Polytechnic and Limkokwing University of Creative Technology.

All of it shows the deep interest of different parties, however, formal AI legislation is not available yet[15], **hence a more systematic approach is necessary**.

The main challenge in the case of AI policies and governance is the dynamic development of the field itself. While some countries or unions (European Union) are partially ahead, still, AI-related policies, strategies, regulations, and action plans are still under development or revision.

Lesotho is just starting different activities related to AI:

1. Currently, no direct regulations of AI are in place in Lesotho. The National Digital Policy 2024[16] Lesotho's National Digital Transformation Strategy: Agenda 2030[17] and Research and Innovation Policy[18],[19] mention AI, as an important topic.
2. The Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovations (MICSTI) is responsible for the topic. Two departments are accountable for the implementation of the best practices of AI-related activities in Lesotho:

   2.1. Department of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT).

   2.2. The Science and Technology Department.

3. Other important stakeholders are

   3.1. The Ministry of Home Affairs.

   3.2. National agency/institution responsible for data protection and management in Lesotho.

   3.3. National agency/institution responsible for digital innovation in Lesotho.[20]

   3.4. All the affected sectors:

      3.4.1. Governmental sector,

      3.4.2. Public business and industries,

      3.4.3. Private business and industries,

      3.4.4. Parastatals,

      3.4.5. Utilities.

[14] Botho University. Bachelor's in data science // https://botswana.bothouniversity.com/courses/bsc-in-data-science/

[15] P. Chanthalangsy, I. Khodeli and L. Xu, "Landscape Study of AI Policies and use in Southern Africa," UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, 2022 // https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385563.

[16] The Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation, "National Digital Policy 2024," 2024.

[17] "Lesotho's National Digital Transformation Strategy: Agenda 2030," 2024.

[18] Department of Science, Technology and Innovations, Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation, Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, "Research and Innovation Policy," 2023 // https://www.last.org.ls/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Research-and-Innovation-Policy-2023-FINAL-DRAFT.pdf.

[19] OACPS Secretariat, "Research and Innovation Policy Recommendation Report for LESOTHO," Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) Secretariat, Bruxelles, 2022 // https://www.oacps.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Lesotho_PRR_OACPS_FInal_2022.pdf.

[20] Such institution is envisioned in the draft innovation policy of Lesotho but has not been established yet.

The main challenges to overcome are the following:

1. Education on Artificial Intelligence at different levels and for different needs, such as development, possible application, governance, etc.
2. While Lesotho is actively improving its infrastructure, AI-related infrastructure is very costly, hence, decisions, on how it should be developed, including data governance policy, are necessary, to proceed.
3. A high workload of highly qualified state officials slows down the process as well.

5. POLICY FRAMEWORK

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence is changing the world, including Lesotho. A national AI policy for Lesotho is essential to ensure that AI technologies are used in ways that promote economic growth, improve public services, and address the country's unique challenges. By creating a clear framework, Lesotho can harness the transformative power of AI while safeguarding its citizens' interests and positioning itself as a competitive player in the global digital economy.

5.2 GOAL OF POLICY REFORM

AI policy aims to create frameworks and guidelines that ensure the safe, fair, and beneficial development and deployment of artificial intelligence technologies, enabling the management of AI's various impacts on society, the economy, and individuals, covering the following areas:

1. **Economic Development and Innovation**
2. **Research, Education and Skills Development**
3. **Social Development and Public Services**
4. **Ethics and Data Privacy**
5. **Global Competitiveness and Strategic Positioning**
6. **Digital Infrastructure Development**

5.3 VISION STATEMENT

Lesotho envisions a future where AI empowers individuals, strengthens communities, and drives sustainable societal progress. The policy aims to promote innovation, uphold human rights, and ensure AI development aligns with national values of inclusivity, safety, and ethical integrity.

Lesotho's AI policy framework aims to promote innovation, safeguard human rights, and ensure that AI technologies are developed and deployed responsibly, contributing to a sustainable and equitable world for present and future generations.

5.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The main guiding principles of the AI policy.

1. Safety and Reliability
   - 1.1. Ensure that AI systems are safe, reliable, and operate as intended.
   - 1.2. Prevent unintended consequences that could harm people or infrastructure.
   - 1.3. Promote research and standards to reduce risks related to advanced AI, including superintelligent systems.
2. Ethics, Accountability, Fairness, Human Rights, and Inclusion.
   - 2.1. Address bias in AI algorithms to avoid discrimination based on race, gender, age, or other protected characteristics.
   - 2.2. Uphold principles of fairness, transparency, and accountability to promote trustworthiness in AI applications.
   - 2.3. Ensure that AI development aligns with human rights principles, supporting inclusion and equality.

2.4. Focus on inclusivity to prevent the exclusion of underrepresented communities in shaping AI policies.

3. Privacy Protection (mostly regulated by data protection policies).
   3.1. Safeguard users' personal data and establish clear regulations on data collection, use, and storage.
   3.2. Support user rights over their data, including informed consent and data security.
4. Economic Stability and Job Impact
   4.1. Manage the economic implications of AI, such as its impact on job markets and labour shifts.
   4.2. Encourage retraining and upskilling programs to help workers adapt to AI-driven changes in employment.
5. Promoting Innovation, Global Competitiveness and Cooperation
   5.1. Create an environment where responsible AI innovation can thrive.
   5.2. Balance regulation and flexibility to not stifle technological advances.
   5.3. Position countries or regions as leaders in AI research and development while maintaining responsible practices.
   5.4. Foster international cooperation on AI standards and governance to address cross-border challenges like cybersecurity and ethical concerns.
6. Security and Prevention of Misuse
   6.1. Prevent the use of AI in harmful and illegal ways, such as terrorism, cyberattacks, phishing, surveillance overreach, and autonomous weapon systems.
   6.2. Establish measures for identifying and mitigating potential security threats associated with AI technologies.

AI policy should ensure that the rights of all stakeholders are taken care of.

1. General Public
2. Businesses and Industries
3. Governments and Public Sector
4. Academic and Research Communities
5. Technology Professionals
6. Marginalized and Vulnerable Communities
7. Global Community

5.5 OBJECTIVES

The objectives described in the table below represent the necessary steps for achieving a thriving and safe AI ecosystem in Lesotho.

No.	Objective	Description
1.	Establishing leadership and governance	Establish a sustainable and efficient AI domain governance setup, consisting of: 1. AI policy maker; 2. AI policy regulator; 3. Data and AI Committee, consisting of the representatives of the government and main stakeholders (MICSTI, regulator, academia, industry, and other stakeholders, listed in section 5.6.1).
2.	Developing legislation and ensuring compliance	Establish and support enabling legal and regulatory environment (see more in section 5.6.2).
3.	Building AI capacity	Support AI capacity building across the public sector and the broader society: 1. Establish Government Training Programs: Offer training for policymakers and public officials on AI technologies and their implications. 2. Provide Education Support: support schools and universities in including AI in the teaching and studies process and introduce AI-focused courses in secondary schools and universities to build foundational knowledge in data science, machine learning, and AI ethics. 3. Technical Training Programs: Offer vocational training and upskilling programs for workers to adapt to the changing job market influenced by AI. 4. Implement Public Awareness Campaigns: Run educational initiatives to inform citizens about their rights and the potential benefits and risks associated with AI. 5. Research Exchanges: Partner with international universities and AI research organizations for student and researcher exchange programs.
4.	Building and providing AI infrastructure	Improve Infrastructure and Technology Access: 1. High-Speed Internet and Connectivity: Expand broadband infrastructure to ensure widespread access to digital resources and facilitate cloud-based AI services.

		2. Data Centres: Develop local data centres to support data storage and processing needs, ensuring data sovereignty and faster processing capabilities. 3. Computational Resources: Provide access to high-performance computing (HPC) for AI training and development purposes.
5.	Leveraging AI to boost productivity, diversify the economy, and create high-value jobs	1. Provide Business Innovation Support: support businesses in implementing AI-driven solutions, e.g. through an Innovation fund. 2. Provide Research Support: support academia to research and develop novel AI-based solutions, through dedicated programs. 3. Establish a Regulatory sandbox – a controlled and supportive environment for innovators to develop, test, and deploy AI while working closely with regulators. It would allow policymakers to evaluate AI applications and risks, ensuring alignment with ethical standards, national priorities, and societal values. 4. Establish dedicated Research and Development (R&D) Hubs: 4.1. AI Research Centres: specialized research groups in universities and other research institutions focusing on AI and related fields, possibly in collaboration with international partners. 4.2. Innovation Labs: Create spaces where startups and researchers can experiment with AI technologies, offering funding and resources for prototype development. 4.3. Collaborative Research Programs: Partner with global AI research organizations to share knowledge and build capacity.
6.	Ensuring inclusiveness and ethical usage of AI	Develop and enforce Ethics and Human Rights Safeguards, AI Safety and Risk Management Regulations: 1. AI Ethics Guidelines: Develop guidelines that align AI practices with the principles of human rights, fairness, non-discrimination, and inclusivity. 2. Ethical Oversight Committees: Establish independent ethics boards to monitor AI deployments and ensure they adhere to ethical standards.

		3. AI Safety Protocols: Mandate the use of risk assessment and mitigation protocols for high-risk AI systems (e.g., those impacting healthcare, finance, or public safety). 4. Regular Audits and Reporting: Require organizations to conduct regular audits of their AI systems and report on performance, safety, and ethical compliance. 5. Bias Mitigation Programs: Develop initiatives to identify and reduce biases in AI models, particularly to prevent discrimination and promote equity. 6. Public Input Mechanisms: Create channels for public participation in discussions about AI deployment and its societal impacts.
7.	Promoting international alignment and sustainability	International Collaboration and Alignment 1. Global Standards Alignment: Ensure that Lesotho's regulations are in line with international best practices to facilitate trade, collaboration, and data-sharing agreements. 2. Participation in Global Forums: Engage in international AI policy discussions to stay informed on emerging trends and adapt to global norms. 3. Regional AI Partnerships: Work with neighbouring countries and regional bodies to share knowledge, resources, and best practices. 4. Global AI Initiatives: Engage in international AI summits and collaborations to stay updated on global standards and advancements.

5.6 POLICY STATEMENTS/PRESCRIPTIONS

5.6.1. Sustainable Governance Structure

Three tiers AI governance setup will be established, consisting of the Policymaker, Regulator and Data and AI Committee, in a way involving all the stakeholders in the AI governance.

1. **Policymaker:** The Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MICSTI) is responsible for formulating AI-related policies in Lesotho. A dedicated department within MICSTI handles: Legislation preparation and approval; Strategy and action plan development; General funding allocation; and Supervision of policy implementation.
2. **Regulator:** A national agency or institution focused on digital innovation in Lesotho will act as an independent regulatory body tasked with overseeing AI development and implementation. This body is tasked with: Implementing AI policies; Overseeing ethical standard; Managing data governance.
3. **Multistakeholder advisory platform:** The Data and AI Committee operates as a triple-helix model, fostering collaboration between the public sector, private sector, and academia to co-develop standards and guidelines that reflect industry realities and technological trends. This committee,

which meets periodically (preliminarily twice a year), oversees AI governance in Lesotho and includes distinguished representatives from various stakeholder groups listed in the "Roles and Responsibilities of the Main Stakeholders in AI Governance" table.

1. *Table 3. Roles and Responsibilities of the Main Stakeholders in AI Governance*

No.	Stakeholder	Description
1.	Policymaker: MICSTI	The MICSTI is the primary driver of AI governance in Lesotho, responsible for policymaking, strategies, legislation, and funding. A dedicated department within MICSTI handles: 1. **Policy Development**: 1.1. Draft and implement AI policies and national strategies that align with Lesotho's development goals. 1.2. Ensure policies are adaptive to emerging AI technologies and trends. 2. **Legislation**: 2.1. Enact laws on AI ethics, data protection, privacy, and intellectual property. 2.2. Establish regulatory frameworks to ensure compliance and accountability in AI deployment. 3. **Funding and Support**: 3.1. Allocate resources for AI research, innovation, and public sector adoption. 3.2. Provide grants and incentives to encourage AI development and integration across various sectors. 4. **Public Services**: 4.1. Utilize AI to enhance healthcare, education, agriculture, and public administration. 4.2. Implement AI-driven solutions to improve service delivery and operational efficiency in public services. 5. **Collaboration**: 5.1. Partner with international organizations, regional bodies, and private companies to ensure best practices and resource-sharing. 5.2. Foster collaborations with academic institutions and research organizations to drive AI innovation and knowledge exchange
2.	Regulator: National agency/institution responsible for digital innovation in Lesotho	A national agency or institution focused on digital innovation in Lesotho will act as the Regulator. This body is responsible for: 1. **Ethics Oversight**: 1.1. Monitor the ethical use of AI, preventing discrimination, bias, and misuse. 1.2. Ensure AI systems adhere to established ethical guidelines.

		2. **Data Governance**: 2.1. Oversee the secure and fair use of data, ensuring adherence to privacy regulations. 2.2. Implement data protection measures to safeguard personal information. 3. **Standards Development**: 3.1. Define technical and operational standards for AI systems. 3.2. Establish benchmarks for AI performance and safety. 4. **Risk Management**: 4.1. Identify and mitigate risks associated with AI deployment in critical sectors. 4.2. Develop contingency plans to address potential AI-related issues. 5. **Dispute Resolution**: 5.1. Address conflicts or complaints related to AI systems and their impact. 5.2. Provide a platform for stakeholders to raise concerns and seek resolutions. 6. **Awareness and Education**: 6.1. Organize public awareness campaigns to promote understanding of AI. 6.2. Educate the public and stakeholders about the benefits and challenges of AI. 7. **Monitoring and Evaluation**: 7.1. Monitor the effectiveness of AI policies and regulations. 7.2. Evaluate the impact of AI initiatives on society and make necessary adjustments.
3.	Multistakeholder Advisory Platform: Data and AI Committee	The Committee supports Data and AI governance in Lesotho and includes distinguished representatives from various stakeholder groups listed in the "Roles and Responsibilities of the Main Stakeholders in AI Governance" table below. The committee's main role is to ensure continuous engagement and dialogue among stakeholders. Its primary functions are: 1. **Stakeholder Representation**: 1.1. Include representatives from government, academia, industry, civil society, and other relevant sectors. 1.2. Ensure diverse perspectives and expertise are considered in AI governance. 2. **Updates and Reporting**:

		2.1. Receive updates on activities, plans, and progress from the Policymaker (MICSTI) and the Regulator. 2.2. Review reports on AI policy implementation, ethical standards, and data governance. 3. **Feedback and Recommendations**: 3.1. Provide feedback on AI governance practices and policies. 3.2. Offer recommendations to improve AI strategies, legislation, and implementation plans. 4. **Subcommittees Formation**: 4.1. Establish permanent or temporary subcommittees for specific topics, such as ethics oversight, data privacy, and AI safety. 4.2. Ensure focused attention on critical areas of AI governance. 5. **Public Engagement and Awareness**: 5.1. Help to promote public awareness and understanding of AI technologies and their implications. 5.2. Facilitate community engagement and gather public input on AI-related issues.
3.1.	Academia and Research Institutions	Universities and research organizations contribute to capacity building, innovation, and critical analysis of AI governance frameworks. 1. Research and Development: Conduct AI-related research in areas like natural language processing, predictive analytics, and ethical AI design. 2. Capacity Building: Develop curricula and training programs to upskill the workforce in AI technologies. 3. Policy Advisory: Provide evidence-based recommendations to inform policymaking and governance frameworks. 4. Collaboration: Partner with international institutions to enhance local research capabilities and knowledge exchange. 5. Ethical Studies: Explore the social, economic, and ethical implications of AI in Lesotho's context.
3.2.	Private Sector	Companies, startups, and tech firms play a pivotal role in driving innovation, investing in AI technologies, and creating practical applications. 1. Innovation: Develop AI solutions tailored to local challenges (e.g., agriculture, healthcare, financial inclusion). 2. Adherence to Standards: Ensure compliance with national and international AI regulations and ethical standards. 3. Data Sharing: Collaborate with public and research sectors to provide datasets for training AI models, while respecting privacy laws.

		4. Investment: Invest in AI research, infrastructure, and workforce development. 5. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Partner with the government on AI-driven projects to improve public services
3.3.	Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	CSOs and NGOs advocate for the ethical use of AI and ensure that vulnerable populations are not left behind in the AI revolution. 1. Advocacy: Promote the ethical and inclusive use of AI while highlighting risks such as bias, inequality, or exclusion. 2. Awareness Campaigns: Educate citizens about AI, its benefits, and potential risks. 3. Monitoring and Accountability: Act as watchdogs to hold governments and private entities accountable for the responsible use of AI. 4. Community Engagement: Ensure the voices of marginalized communities are included in AI policymaking. 5. Capacity Building: Provide training and resources for communities to understand and benefit from AI technologies.
4.	International Organizations and Development Partners	Global organizations and partners provide technical, financial, and policy support to help Lesotho establish its AI governance framework. 1. Technical Assistance: Provide expertise and resources for drafting policies, setting standards, and building infrastructure. 2. Capacity Building: Support training programs and workshops to enhance local expertise in AI. 3. Funding: Offer financial aid or grants for AI research, innovation hubs, and governance projects. 4. Knowledge Sharing: Share international best practices and facilitate collaboration with other countries and regions. 5. Policy Alignment: Help Lesotho align its AI governance framework with international standards, such as the OECD AI Principles or UNESCO's AI Ethics Guidelines, African Union policies, etc.
5.	Media and the Public	The media and citizens are crucial in shaping public discourse, promoting transparency, and holding stakeholders accountable. 1. Media: 1.1. Educate the public about AI and its implications. 1.2. Investigate and report on potential misuse or ethical breaches in AI systems. 1.3. Facilitate dialogue between stakeholders and the public. 2. Citizens: 2.1. Provide feedback on AI systems and governance policies.

		2.2. Advocate for transparency, fairness, and inclusivity in AI applications. 2.3. Participate in public consultations and discussions to shape AI policies.

5.6.2. Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment

Creating an enabling legal and regulatory environment for AI in Lesotho involves establishing laws, regulations, and frameworks that foster the responsible use of AI while supporting innovation and protecting public interests. Here's how this can be structured:

1. Foundational AI Legislation
   1.1. AI-Specific Law: Introduce a comprehensive AI Act that defines AI, sets the scope for regulation, and outlines the responsibilities of developers, businesses, and government bodies in the AI ecosystem.
   1.2. Updates to Existing Legislation: Review and update current laws in areas like data protection, consumer rights, and cybersecurity to include AI-related provisions.
2. Data Protection and Privacy Regulations
   2.1. Comprehensive Data Protection Law:
      2.1.1. Ensure that AI systems comply with robust data privacy laws that protect citizens' personal data. This could align with models like the EU's GDPR to enhance data security and user trust.
      2.1.2. Implement strong data privacy laws to safeguard user information and build trust in AI systems. Especial care should be taken to mitigate the risk of the Mosaic effects, which occurs when disparate pieces of seemingly innocuous data are combined to reveal sensitive or confidential information, even when individual datasets are anonymized or secured. Strategies, such as differential privacy, federated learning, access control, data minimization, and synthetic data generation can be used to minimize these risks.
   2.2. Consent and Transparency Requirements: Implement clear rules requiring AI systems to obtain user consent for data usage and provide transparent information on how personal data is processed.
   2.3. Open Data Policies: Promote an open data environment where anonymized datasets can be shared and accessed for training AI models while ensuring data privacy.
   2.4. Data Sharing Partnerships: Collaborate with local and international organizations for data-sharing agreements that can enhance research and development.
3. Intellectual Property (IP) Rights and Innovation Protection
   3.1. Adapt IP Laws: Update intellectual property laws to cover AI-generated works and innovations, clarifying ownership rights in cases involving AI contributions.
   3.2. Incentives for Innovation: Provide legal protections and incentives to encourage AI research and development within the country.

4. Workforce and Labor Law Adaptation
    4.1. Protection for Workers: Amend labour laws to account for changes in the job market due to AI automation, ensuring workers have support through retraining and upskilling programs.
    4.2. Fair AI Use in Employment: Regulate the use of AI in hiring and workplace management to prevent biases and unfair practices.
5. Consumer Protection and User Rights
    5.1. User Rights Framework: Establish a framework that protects users' rights, ensuring they can access explanations of AI-driven decisions that impact them and dispute them if necessary.
    5.2. Product Liability Standards: Implement standards that make clear who is liable when AI products malfunction or cause harm.

5.6.3. AI integration in key sectors

The Government will promote and support the development of AI in Key Sectors:

1. Healthcare: Use AI to support healthcare services, such as diagnostics, personalized medicine, and health data analysis to improve patient care.
2. Agriculture: Implement AI technologies for precision farming, crop monitoring, and pest control to boost agricultural productivity.
3. Education: Develop AI tools that enhance personalized learning experiences and improve access to educational content.
4. Public Services: Integrate AI in public administration to streamline processes and enhance service delivery, such as automated document processing and smart resource management.
5. AI for Sustainability: Use AI to support environmental monitoring, conservation efforts, and sustainable urban development.

5.6.4. Financial mechanisms

1. Establish government grants, incentives, and venture capital programs to encourage AI startups and innovation. Innovation fund, guided by frugal innovation principles, such as affordability, simplicity, and scalability, and oriented towards:
    1.1. Developing cost-effective solutions by rethinking traditional approaches.
    1.2. Leveraging local resources, ingenuity, and constraints as drivers of innovation.
    1.3. Delivering high value with minimal expense.
2. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): Attract foreign investors by creating a favourable regulatory environment and promoting the country as an emerging tech hub.

5.6.5. Feedback Mechanisms

1. Implement a system for continuous feedback from users and stakeholders to adjust and improve AI policies and applications.
2. Metrics for Success: Develop indicators to measure the impact and effectiveness of AI initiatives across different sectors.
3. Regular Policy Reviews: Update policies periodically to reflect technological advancements and societal changes.

6. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

6.1 LOGIC OF THE PLAN

To implement this policy, a comprehensive Implementation Plan (hereinafter referred to as the Plan) has been developed. This Plan is based on a detailed analysis of the country's specific needs and incorporates best practices and guidance from international organizations.

Effective execution of the Policy and its Plan requires strong commitment at both high-level and implementation levels, sufficient resource allocation, and relevant staff skills. With accountability and oversight mechanisms in place, a robust governance structure can sustain momentum, meet Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and drive the successful implementation of broadband and shared infrastructure initiatives. It is crucial to periodically assess stakeholder needs and evolving broadband requirements at every phase of the Plan to inform the next steps. The governance framework, aligned with the existing structure, prioritizes and supports all activities outlined in the Plan, facilitates necessary decision-making, and oversees performance to ensure the successful implementation of the Policy.

Considering the principle of agility, it is essential to periodically revisit the Plan to address shifts in priorities, resource constraints, implementation progress, and emerging risks or challenges.

The flow highlights the interdependence between these layers: the Objective sets the high-level goal, which then dictates the target or action to be taken. To achieve the target, detailed measures must be implemented. Each layer builds upon the previous one, ensuring a logical and actionable progression within the Policy, supported by relevant deliberation. Additionally, Key Indicators for each Objective are defined to monitor.

6.2 OBJECTIVES, TASKS, MEASURES, AND INDICATORS

Objective 1: Establishing leadership and governance			
Targets	**Measures**	**Responsible Institution**	**Timeline**
Establish a sustainable and efficient AI domain governance setup, consisting of: 1. AI policy maker. 2. AI policy regulator. 3. Data and AI Committee, consists of the representatives of the government and main stakeholders (MICSTI, regulator, academia, industry, and other stakeholders, listed in section 5.6.1).	1. Establish a workgroup (temporary committee) for AI governance implementation. 2. Prepare legislation for the AI policy maker, AI policy regulator and Data and AI Committee. 3. Discuss the legislation with stakeholders. 4. Get the legislation approved. 5. Establish relevant bodies (1-3). 6. Assign 6.1. Head of AI policy maker 6.2. Head AI policy regulator. 7. Elect relevant stakeholders to the Data and AI committee. 8. Disband AI governance implementation committee (see item 1).	MICSTI	Planning: 2025 Q2 - Q3 Implementing: 2025 Q3 – 2026 Q2
Objective 2: Developing legislation and ensuring compliance			
Establish and support enabling legal and regulatory environment.	1. Deveop regulation 2. for the establishment of governing bodies – see Objective 1 and subsection 5.6.2.	MICSTI AI policy maker	Planning: 2025 Q2 – 2026 Q4 Implementation: 1. 2025 Q3 – 2026 Q2 (mostly Temporary AI committee)

			2. 2026 Q2 – continuous, AI policy maker
Objective 3: Building AI Capacity			
1. Establish Government Training Programs: Offer training for policymakers and public officials on AI technologies and their implications.	1. Define Objectives 1.1. Assess Needs: Identify the specific areas where AI knowledge is required (e.g., policy-making, public service delivery, ethics, etc.). 1.2. Set Goals: Determine whether the training aims to raise awareness, build technical skills, or provide tools for decision-making. 2. Identify the Target Audience 2.1. Roles: Focus on officials who will directly interact with AI-related policies, procurement, or implementation. 2.2. Expertise Levels: Segment participants into beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels to tailor the training content. 3. Design the Curriculum 3.1. General Topics: Cover AI basics, applications in government, ethical considerations, and data privacy. 3.2. Role-Specific Modules: 3.2.1. For policymakers: AI governance, regulation, and ethics.	AI regulator MICSTI	Planning: 2026 Q2 – 2026 Q3 Implementation: 2026 Q3 - continuous

	3.2.2. For IT teams: Technical implementation and AI tools. 3.2.3. For public-facing officials: AI in citizen engagement and service delivery. 3.3. Case Studies: Use real-world examples relevant to the public sector. 3.4. Interactive Components: Include hands-on workshops, simulations, and AI tool demonstrations. 4. Engage Expert Trainers 4.1. Collaborate with academic institutions, industry experts, and AI research organizations. 4.2. Include government officials from countries or regions that have successfully implemented AI initiatives. 5. Choose the Format 5.1. In-Person Workshops: Ideal for interactive sessions and group activities. 5.2. Online Training: Offers flexibility and scalability. Use platforms like webinars, self-paced courses, or live virtual classes. 5.3. Hybrid Model: Combines the advantages of both in-person and online methods. 6. Leverage Resources		

	6.1. Existing Frameworks: Utilize materials from organizations like OECD, UNESCO, or national AI councils. 6.2. Custom Content: Develop localized content aligned with regional priorities and policies. 6.3. Open AI Platforms: Use free AI tools for demonstrations. 7. Include Ethical and Legal Aspects 7.1. Address concerns about bias, fairness, accountability, and transparency in AI systems. 7.2. Train officials to evaluate AI tools for compliance with ethical and legal standards. 8. Evaluate and Certify 8.1. Conduct pre- and post-training assessments to measure knowledge gained. 8.2. Provide certifications to recognize successful completion, boosting credibility and motivation. 9. Build Continuous Learning Pathways 9.1. Establish ongoing AI forums or communities of practice for government officials. 9.2. Offer advanced training programs for deeper specialization. 10. Monitor Impact		

	10.1. Track the implementation of learned skills in real-world government initiatives. 10.2. Gather feedback to improve future training sessions.		
2. Provide Education Support: support schools and universities in including AI in the teaching and studies process and introduce AI-focused courses in secondary schools and universities to build foundational knowledge in data science, machine learning, and AI ethics.	1. Develop an AI Curriculum Framework 1.1. Define Learning Objectives: 1.1.1. For secondary schools: Focus on basic AI concepts, computational thinking, and responsible AI use. 1.1.2. For universities: Include foundational knowledge in data science, machine learning, neural networks, and AI ethics. 1.2. Incorporate AI Across Disciplines: Integrate AI-related topics into STEM subjects (e.g., using AI in biology or physics) and non-STEM fields like humanities and social sciences (e.g., ethical implications of AI). 1.3. Align with Standards: Ensure the curriculum aligns with national education standards and international frameworks (e.g., UNESCO guidelines on AI in education). 2. Support Teacher Training and Development 2.1. Workshops and Certification Programs: Train teachers to	**Leading organization:** Ministry of Education and Training AI regulator MICSTI	Curriculum development: 6 months Teacher training: 3-6 months Launch AI courses: 1 year Partnership: ongoing Evaluation and improvement: annualy

	understand AI concepts and use AI tools effectively in the classroom. 2.2. Collaborate with AI Experts: Partner with universities, tech companies, and research organizations to provide up-to-date training. 2.3. Provide Resources: Offer teaching materials, such as lesson plans, activity guides, and AI software access. 3. Build Educational Resources and Infrastructure 3.1. Learning Materials 3.1.1. Develop textbooks, online courses, and interactive tools for AI education. 3.1.2. Use platforms like AI4ALL, Google AI Education, or AI4K12 for accessible resources. 3.2. Hands-on Tools: Provide schools with AI kits, robotics platforms, and simulation software to make learning interactive. 3.3. Access to Technology: Ensure schools have access to computational resources like cloud-based AI platforms, high-performance computers, or learning hubs.		

	4. Establish AI-Focused Programs in Schools and Universities 4.1. Secondary Schools: 4.1.1. Launch AI clubs and hackathons to foster interest in AI. 4.1.2. Introduce electives in coding, data analysis, and AI applications. 4.1.3. Implement AI ethics discussions to build awareness about the social impact of technology. 4.2. Universities: 4.2.1. Develop specialized degree programs in AI and data science. 4.2.2. Offer interdisciplinary courses, such as AI in healthcare, law, and education. 4.2.3. Promote research opportunities for students to work on AI projects with societal impact. 5. Foster Industry and Academic Partnerships 5.1. Collaborate with Industry: 5.1.1. Work with AI companies to create internship opportunities and mentorship programs for students. 5.1.2. Use industry-driven case studies and tools in teaching. 5.2. Engage Universities: Encourage partnerships with global universities		

	that excel in AI research to co-develop programs. 6. Promote Equity and Inclusion 6.1. Accessible Programs: Ensure AI education resources are accessible to students in underserved and rural areas. 6.2. Diverse Representation: Encourage participation from underrepresented groups, including girls, minorities, and people with disabilities, through scholarships and awareness campaigns. 7. Introduce Competitions and Challenges 7.1. Host AI challenges, innovation fairs, and hackathons to engage students in problem-solving and real-world AI applications. 8. Raise Awareness Among Stakeholders 8.1. Public Awareness Campaigns: Promote the importance of AI education to parents, students, and policymakers. 8.2. Incentivize Participation: Offer grants to schools and universities that successfully implement AI courses. 9. Leverage Online Platforms		

	9.1. Collaborate with platforms like Coursera, Khan Academy, or EdX to provide high-quality AI courses. 9.2. Create a dedicated national or regional platform for AI education. 10. Monitor and Evaluate Programs 10.1. Feedback Mechanisms: Collect input from students, teachers, and industry partners to refine the programs. 10.2. Assessment Tools: Use standardized tests and projects to evaluate the impact of AI education.		
3. Technical Training Programs: Offer vocational training and upskilling programs for workers to adapt to the changing job market influenced by AI.	1. Assess Workforce Needs 1.1. Identify Impacted Industries: Pinpoint sectors significantly influenced by AI (e.g., manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, finance, and retail). 1.2. Skill Gap Analysis: Work with industry leaders and workers to identify the skills most in demand, such as AI operation, data analysis, machine learning basics, and programming. 1.3. Categorize Workers: Segment the workforce based on their current skill levels (entry-level, mid-career, advanced) to tailor training programs. 2. Define Program Objectives 2.1. Upskilling: Teach workers how to use AI tools relevant to their industries	MICSTI Ministry of Education and Training AI regulator AI policy maker	Planning: 2026 Q2 – 2026 Q3 Implementation: 2026 Q3 - continuous

	(e.g., predictive maintenance in manufacturing). 2.2. Reskilling: Train workers for entirely new roles created by AI (e.g., data labeling, AI system monitoring, or robotics coordination). 2.3. Basic AI Literacy: Equip workers with foundational knowledge about AI concepts to enhance adaptability. 3. Design Flexible Training Modules 3.1. Modular Structure: Divide training into short, focused modules to accommodate busy schedules. 3.2. Role-Specific Content: Tailor courses to the specific roles workers are transitioning to, e.g.: 3.2.1. For retail: AI-powered customer insights and inventory management. 3.2.2. For manufacturing: Working with collaborative robots (cobots) and automated systems. 3.3. Core Topics: 3.3.1. Basic AI and machine learning concepts. 3.3.2. Data interpretation and visualization. 3.3.3. Working alongside AI-powered systems. 3.3.4. Ethics and implications of AI in the workplace.		

	4. Choose Delivery Methods 4.1. In-Person Training: Suitable for hands-on skill development, such as operating robots or using industry-specific AI tools. 4.2. Online Platforms: Use e-learning platforms for self-paced courses, webinars, and virtual simulations. 4.3. Hybrid Model: Combine in-person workshops with online learning for maximum flexibility and engagement. 4.4. Immersive Technologies: Leverage AR/VR for realistic, hands-on training in simulated environments. 5. Partner with Stakeholders 5.1. Industry Collaboration: Work with AI companies and industry leaders to co-develop relevant content and provide real-world insights. 5.2. Academic Institutions: Partner with universities and technical schools to ensure the curriculum aligns with future workforce needs. 5.3. Government Support: Seek funding and policy support to subsidize training for workers, particularly in sectors undergoing disruption. 6. Provide Certification and Recognition		

	6.1. Skill Validation: Offer certifications to validate workers' skills and make them more attractive to employers. 6.2. Micro-Credentials: Provide digital badges for completing specific modules or skills to allow workers to build their qualifications incrementally. 7. Foster Inclusivity and Accessibility 7.1. Affordability: Subsidize programs or offer free courses to ensure accessibility for low-income workers. 7.2. Localized Training: Develop content in local languages and adapt examples to regional industries. 7.3. Diverse Formats: Accommodate varying education levels with user-friendly, practical content. 8. Include Continuous Learning Opportunities 8.1. Establish pathways for workers to continue learning through advanced courses or transition to higher-level roles. 8.2. Create AI learning communities or forums for workers to share knowledge and stay updated. 9. Promote Awareness and Engagement 9.1. Awareness Campaigns: Highlight the benefits of upskilling through social		

	media, company newsletters, and community events. 9.2. Employer Incentives: Encourage companies to sponsor employees for training through tax benefits or grants. 10. Evaluate Program Effectiveness 10.1. Track Outcomes: Measure job placements, promotions, or productivity improvements among participants. 10.2. Feedback Mechanisms: Use participant surveys and employer feedback to refine content and delivery methods. 10.3. Adapt to Trends: Regularly update training modules based on emerging AI technologies and industry needs.		
4. Implement Public Awareness Campaigns: Run educational initiatives to inform citizens about their rights and the potential benefits and risks associated with AI.	1. Define Campaign Objectives 1.1. Educate About Rights: Inform citizens about data privacy, AI ethics, and legal protections related to AI usage. 1.2. Highlight Benefits: Explain how AI can enhance public services, healthcare, education, and daily life. 1.3. Address Risks: Raise awareness about issues such as bias, job displacement, and potential misuse of AI. 2. Identify Target Audiences	MICSTI Ministry of Education and Training AI regulator AI policy maker	Planning: 2026 Q2 – 2026 Q3 Implementation: 2026 Q3 - continuous

	2.1. General Public: Address broad concerns about AI in daily life. 2.2. Specific Groups: Tailor messages for students, professionals, parents, or vulnerable populations who may interact with AI differently. 2.3. Underrepresented Communities: Ensure inclusivity by reaching groups that may lack access to AI resources or understanding. 3. Design Clear and Engaging Messages 3.1. Simplify Concepts: Use plain language to explain AI concepts like machine learning, automation, and data ethics. 3.2. Focus on Relevance: Relate AI to citizens' daily lives (e.g., smart home devices, online recommendations, healthcare applications). 3.3. Balance Benefits and Risks: Avoid overhyping AI while addressing valid concerns in a transparent manner. 4. Use Diverse Communication Channels 4.1. Traditional Media: 4.1.1. TV and radio programs explaining AI basics. 4.1.2. Print materials like brochures, posters, and newspaper articles. 4.2. Digital Platforms:		

	4.2.1. Social media campaigns using infographics, short videos, and live Q&A sessions. 4.2.2. Dedicated websites or microsites with resources, FAQs, and real-life examples of AI applications. 4.3. Community Events: 4.3.1. Workshops, town halls, or seminars in schools, libraries, and community centers. 4.3.2. AI demonstration booths at public fairs or festivals. 5. Collaborate with Stakeholders 5.1. Government Agencies: Ensure alignment with national AI policies and regulations. 5.2. Educational Institutions: Partner with schools and universities to provide resources and organize awareness programs. 5.3. Private Sector: Engage tech companies to share insights and sponsor campaigns. 5.4. Nonprofits: Collaborate with organizations focused on digital literacy and ethics. 6. Address Ethical and Privacy Concerns 6.1. Educate the public about their data rights, such as:		

	6.1.1. Knowing how AI systems collect and use their data. 6.1.2. Options for opting out or protecting personal information. 6.2. Discuss ethical AI practices, including fairness, transparency, and accountability. 7. Create Interactive Learning Opportunities 7.1. Hands-On Workshops: Teach citizens how to use AI tools responsibly (e.g., privacy settings, recognizing AI-generated content). 7.2. Gamification: Use apps or online quizzes to test and improve AI literacy in an engaging way. 7.3. AI Simulations: Provide accessible demonstrations of AI, such as chatbots or image recognition, to demystify the technology. 8. Highlight Real-World Examples 8.1. Share success stories of AI improving healthcare, transportation, or disaster management. 8.2. Provide case studies of challenges, such as algorithmic bias, and how they were addressed. 9. Monitor Campaign Reach and Effectiveness		

	9.1. Metrics: Track attendance at events, website visits, and engagement on social media platforms. 9.2. Feedback: Collect citizen opinions through surveys, polls, and focus groups to refine future initiatives. 9.3. Impact Assessment: Measure changes in public understanding and attitudes toward AI over time. 10. Establish a Long-Term Plan 10.1. Regular Updates: Keep the public informed about new AI developments and regulations. 10.2. Continuous Learning: Provide ongoing opportunities for citizens to deepen their understanding of AI. 10.3. Community Forums: Create platforms where people can voice concerns, ask questions, and share experiences with AI.		
5. Research Exchanges: Partner with international universities and AI research organizations for student and researcher exchange programs.	1. Define Program Objectives 1.1. Enhance Expertise: Facilitate knowledge exchange in AI, machine learning, and data science. 1.2. Foster Innovation: Encourage collaborative research on cutting-edge AI topics such as explainable AI, ethics, or applications in healthcare, education, and climate science. 1.3. Build Networks: Strengthen relationships between institutions	MICSTI Ministry of Education and Training AI regulator AI policy maker	Planning: 2026 Q2 – 2026 Q3 Implementation: 2026 Q3 - continuous

	and create a global community of AI researchers and students. 2. Identify Partner Institutions 2.1. International Universities: Target institutions renowned for their AI research and innovation. 2.2. Research Organizations: Collaborate with global AI labs, tech companies, or organizations like OpenAI, DeepMind, or national AI research bodies. 2.3. Mutual Interest: Select partners with aligned research goals or complementary expertise. 3. Develop Program Framework 3.1. Duration: Define the length of exchanges (e.g., 6 months, 1 year, or short-term visits). 3.2. Eligibility Criteria: 3.2.1. For students: Graduate-level AI, data science, or related field enrollees. 3.2.2. For researchers: any level, especialy junior researchers working on AI projects. 3.3. Research Areas: Focus on specific AI topics such as ethics, robotics, natural language processing, or AI for social good.		

	3.4. Deliverables: Require participants to produce outcomes like joint publications, patents, or prototypes. 4. Secure Funding and Resources 4.1. Funding Sources: 4.1.1. Government grants for research and education. 4.1.2. Sponsorships from tech companies or international organizations. 4.2. Joint funding with partner institutions. 4.3. In-Kind Support: Access to labs, computational resources, or datasets during exchanges. 5. Formalize Agreements 5.1. Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs): Establish clear agreements covering goals, roles, responsibilities, and intellectual property rights. 5.2. Visa and Legal Assistance: Simplify visa processes and ensure legal compliance for participants. 6. Design Participant Support Systems 6.1. Orientation Programs: Provide cultural and logistical support to help participants adjust to new environments.		

	6.2. Mentorship: Pair participants with mentors from host institutions for guidance on research and collaboration. 6.3. Facilities: Ensure access to housing, labs, libraries, and other resources. 7. Promote and Recruit Participants 7.1. Awareness Campaigns: Share program details through university networks, research conferences, and online platforms. 7.2. Application Process: 7.2.1. Open applications for interested students and researchers. 7.2.2. Evaluate candidates based on research proposals, experience, and alignment with program goals. 8. Foster Collaborative Projects 8.1. Joint Research: Encourage collaborative papers, AI model development, or data sharing between host and home institutions. 8.2. Workshops and Seminars: Organize events where participants present findings and share ideas. 8.3. Cross-Cultural Learning: Promote exchange of diverse perspectives to tackle global challenges.		

	9. Measure Impact 9.1. KPIs: Track outcomes like the number of joint publications, patents, or prototypes developed. 9.2. Feedback Mechanisms: Collect participant and partner feedback to refine the program. 9.3. Alumni Networks: Create a network of past participants to foster long-term collaboration. 10. Scale the Program 10.1. Expand Partnerships: Add more institutions and organizations to broaden the program's reach. 10.2. Diversify Research Topics: Explore emerging AI fields like quantum computing, edge AI, or AI in sustainability. 10.3. Increase Accessibility: Provide scholarships and grants to make exchanges accessible to underrepresented groups.		
Objective 4. Building and providing AI infrastructure			
Improve Infrastructure and Technology Access: 1. High-Speed Internet and Connectivity: Expand broadband infrastructure to ensure widespread access to digital resources and facilitate cloud-based AI services.	1. High-Speed Internet and Connectivity Expand broadband infrastructure for widespread digital access and cloud-based AI services.	AI regulator AI policy maker MICSTI	Planning: 2026 Q2 – 2026 Q3 Implementation: 2026 Q3 - continuous

2. Data Centres: Develop local data centres to support data storage and processing needs, ensuring data sovereignty and faster processing capabilities. Computational Resources: Provide access to high-performance computing (HPC) for AI training and development purposes.	1.1. Partner with telecom providers to extend fiber-optic networks to underserved areas. 1.2. Implement government subsidies or public-private partnerships to fund connectivity in rural regions. 1.3. Deploy 5G networks in urban and semi-urban areas for enhanced speed and reliability. 1.4. Monitor and maintain connectivity to ensure consistent service quality. 2. Local Data Centres Establish data centers to support storage, processing, and data sovereignty. 2.1. Incentivize private investment in data center construction via tax breaks or grants. 2.2. Ensure centers meet international energy efficiency standards to minimize environmental impact. 2.3. Develop policies to secure sensitive local data and ensure compliance with data protection laws. 2.4. Use modular and scalable designs to accommodate future growth in data demands. 3. Computational Resources Provide access to high-performance computing (HPC) for AI training and development.	Ministry of Education and Training	

	3.1. Establish centralized HPC facilities accessible to researchers, businesses, and startups. 3.2. Create a cloud-based platform for shared HPC resources to reduce individual setup costs. 3.3. Partner with universities and tech companies to provide cutting-edge computational tools. 3.4. Offer training programs to build expertise in utilizing HPC resources for AI.		
Leveraging AI to boost productivity, diversify the economy, and create high-value jobs			
1. Provide Business Innovation Support: support businesses in implementing AI-driven solutions, e.g. through an Innovation fund.	1. Establish an Innovation Fund 1.1. Allocate a dedicated budget to support AI-driven business initiatives. 1.2. Define funding tiers for startups, SMEs, and larger organizations based on project scope and potential impact. 2. Set Clear Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria 2.1. Focus on businesses with innovative AI applications addressing industry challenges or societal needs. 2.2. Use criteria like feasibility, scalability, market potential, and alignment with strategic goals. 3. Offer Expert Guidance and Resources	AI policy maker AI regulator MICSTI	Planning: 2026 Q2 – 2026 Q3 Implementation: 2026 Q3 - continuous

	3.1. Provide mentorship and consulting services from AI and business experts. 3.2. Create toolkits and templates for AI project implementation. 4. Facilitate Training and Knowledge Sharing 4.1. Organize workshops, webinars, and hackathons to build AI literacy. 4.2. Encourage collaboration through networking events or innovation hubs. 5. Foster Public-Private Partnerships 5.1. Collaborate with tech firms, academic institutions, and government bodies for co-funding and support. 5.2. Leverage partnerships to access cutting-edge AI research and infrastructure. 6. Monitor and Evaluate Projects 6.1. Set milestones and KPIs to track the success of funded initiatives. 6.2. Share success stories to inspire other businesses and attract new participants. 7. Ensure Long-Term Sustainability 7.1. Encourage recipients to develop self-sustaining business models.		

	7.2. Provide follow-up funding or resources for scaling successful projects.		
2. Provide Research Support: support academia to research and develop novel AI-based solutions, through dedicated programs.	1. Establish Dedicated Research Programs 1.1. Create funding initiatives for AI-focused academic research. 1.2. Prioritize areas with high societal or industrial impact, such as healthcare, climate, and automation. 2. Provide Grants and Scholarships 2.1. Offer research grants to institutions and scholarships for AI-focused students. 2.2. Fund interdisciplinary projects to promote collaboration between fields. 3. Foster Academic-Industry Collaboration 3.1. Partner with industry to align research goals with real-world applications. 3.2. Facilitate internships, joint research initiatives, and knowledge-sharing programs. 4. Develop Research Infrastructure 4.1. Invest in AI research labs, computational resources, and access to datasets. 4.2. Support open-source platforms and tools for broader accessibility.	AI regulator AI policy maker MICSTI Ministry of Education and Training	Planning: 2026 Q2 – 2026 Q3 Implementation: 2026 Q3 - continuous

	5. Organize Competitions and Conferences 5.1. Host AI innovation challenges to encourage breakthrough ideas. 5.2. Fund and promote academic participation in global AI conferences. 6. Monitor and Evaluate Impact 6.1. Regularly review funded projects to measure progress and outcomes. 6.2. Showcase successful research to attract more talent and funding.		
3. Establish a Regulatory sandbox – a controlled and supportive environment for innovators to develop, test, and deploy AI while working closely with regulators. It would allow policymakers to evaluate AI applications and risks, ensuring alignment with ethical standards, national priorities, and societal values.	1. Define Objectives and Scope 1.1. Set clear goals for the sandbox, focusing on innovation, risk assessment, and regulatory alignment. 1.2. Identify key areas such as healthcare, finance, and autonomous systems for pilot projects. 2. Create a Controlled Environment 2.1. Develop a secure and monitored infrastructure to test AI solutions. 2.2. Provide access to datasets, computational resources, and technical support. 3. Engage Stakeholders	AI regulator AI policy maker MICSTI	Planning: 2026 Q2 – 2026 Q3 Implementation: 2026 Q3 - continuous

	3.1. Involve regulators, innovators, academics, and industry experts to guide the sandbox. 3.2. Establish a dedicated advisory board for policy alignment and oversight. 4. Establish Testing Protocols 4.1. Define evaluation criteria, including ethical standards, safety, transparency, and societal impact. 4.2. Set clear timelines and milestones for testing and feedback. 5. Provide Legal and Technical Support 5.1. Offer guidance on regulatory compliance and intellectual property protection. 5.2. Ensure innovators can access mentorship and domain-specific expertise. 6. Monitor, Evaluate, and Iterate 6.1. Collect data on AI system performance and potential risks during testing. 6.2. Use findings to refine policies, standards, and sandbox operations. 7. Promote Knowledge Sharing 7.1. Publish case studies and best practices from sandbox initiatives.		

	7.2. Encourage collaboration to enhance understanding of AI's benefits and challenges		
4. Establish dedicated Research and Development (R&D) Hubs: 4.1. AI Research Centres: specialized research groups in universities and other research institutions focusing on AI and related fields, possibly in collaboration with international partners. 4.2. Innovation Labs: Create spaces where startups and researchers can experiment with AI technologies, offering funding and resources for prototype development. 4.3. Collaborative Research Programs: Partner with global AI research organizations to share knowledge and build capacity.	1. AI Research Centres 1.1. Identify universities and institutions with strong research potential in AI. 1.2. Establish specialized AI research groups focused on priority areas like machine learning, NLP, and robotics. 1.3. Foster international collaboration by partnering with global AI research leaders and organizations. 2. Innovation Labs 2.1. Develop state-of-the-art labs equipped with computational resources, tools, and datasets for AI experimentation. 2.2. Provide grants and funding for startups, researchers, and innovators to develop and test AI prototypes. 2.3. Host regular hackathons, workshops, and mentorship programs to drive creativity and collaboration. 3. Collaborative Research Programs 3.1. Form partnerships with global AI research bodies to share knowledge and access cutting-edge advancements.	AI policy maker MICSTI Ministry of Education and Training	Planning: 2026 Q4 – 2027 Q2 Implementation: 2027 Q3 - continuous

	3.2. Support joint research initiatives and exchange programs to build local expertise. 3.3. Leverage international networks to co-develop solutions addressing global challenges. 4. Operational and Governance Framework 4.1. Establish a central governing body to oversee the hubs, allocate resources, and ensure alignment with national priorities. 4.2. Monitor and evaluate R&D outcomes to measure impact and continuously improve programs.		
Objective 6. Ensuring inclusiveness and ethical usage of AI			
1. AI Ethics Guidelines: Develop guidelines that align AI practices with the principles of human rights, fairness, non-discrimination, and inclusivity.	1. Define Core Principles 1.1. Establish foundational values such as human rights, fairness, transparency, non-discrimination, and inclusivity. 1.2. Align with global frameworks like UNESCO's AI Ethics Recommendation and OECD AI Principles. 2. Engage Stakeholders 2.1. Consult diverse stakeholders, including policymakers, academics, industry leaders, and civil society, to ensure broad representation.	AI regulator	Planning: 2026 Q4 – 2027 Q2 Implementation: 2027 Q3 - continuous

	2.2. Include marginalized groups to address inclusivity and non-discrimination effectively. 3. Draft Comprehensive Guidelines 3.1. Cover areas like data privacy, accountability, bias mitigation, and ethical AI design. 3.2. Provide specific directives for industries and applications with high societal impact. 4. Establish Implementation Frameworks 4.1. Develop tools, checklists, and metrics for organizations to operationalize the guidelines. 4.2. Offer training programs to educate developers and decision-makers on ethical AI practices. 5. Ensure Compliance and Monitoring 5.1. Create mechanisms to assess adherence, such as audits or certification programs. 5.2. Regularly update guidelines based on technological advancements and societal feedback. 6. Promote Public Awareness 6.1. Disseminate the guidelines through campaigns, workshops, and		

	partnerships to foster public trust in AI.		
2. Ethical Oversight Committees: Establish independent ethics boards to monitor AI deployments and ensure they adhere to ethical standards.	1. Define Mandate and Objectives 1.1. Set the committee's scope to include monitoring AI deployments, ensuring adherence to ethical standards, and addressing public concerns. 2. Assemble Diverse Expertise 2.1. Include members from academia, industry, government, civil society, and ethics specialists to ensure balanced perspectives. 2.2. Ensure representation from underrepresented groups to address inclusivity. 3. Establish Operational Framework 3.1. Define processes for reviewing AI projects, assessing risks, and providing recommendations. 3.2. Develop protocols for regular audits, reporting, and stakeholder engagement. 4. Provide Resources and Authority 4.1. Equip committees with access to necessary data, technical tools, and legal authority to enforce recommendations. 5. Monitor and Evaluate Deployments	AI regulator	Planning: 2027 Q4 – 2028 Q2 Implementation: 2028 Q3 - continuous

	5.1. Regularly assess AI systems for compliance with ethical guidelines, focusing on fairness, accountability, and transparency. 6. Ensure Public Transparency 6.1. Publish reports and findings to maintain public trust and demonstrate accountability. 7. Adapt and Update Practices 7.1. Continuously refine oversight mechanisms based on emerging technologies and societal needs.		
3. AI Safety Protocols: Mandate the use of risk assessment and mitigation protocols for high-risk AI systems (e.g., those impacting healthcare, finance, or public safety).	1. Define High-Risk AI Systems 1.1. Identify sectors and applications (e.g., healthcare, finance, public safety) where AI poses significant risks. 1.2. Establish criteria for categorizing systems as high-risk based on potential impact. 2. Develop Risk Assessment Standards 2.1. Create standardized protocols for assessing risks, including bias detection, data security, and system reliability. 2.2. Mandate scenario testing, stress testing, and fail-safe mechanisms for high-risk systems.	AI regulator	Planning: 2026 Q4 – 2027 Q2 Implementation: 2027 Q3 - continuous

	3. Mandate Mitigation Measures 3.1. Require safeguards like human-in-the-loop mechanisms, explainability features, and real-time monitoring. 3.2. Ensure systems are designed to minimize harm and allow for quick intervention in case of failures. 4. Enforce Regulatory Compliance 4.1. Establish legal requirements for risk assessments and documentation before deployment. 4.2. Introduce penalties or suspension for non-compliance. 5. Monitor and Audit Systems 5.1. Implement regular auditing and post-deployment monitoring to evaluate safety and compliance. 5.2. Use independent third parties to review systems objectively. 6. Provide Training and Resources 6.1. Offer guidelines, tools, and training to developers and operators for implementing safety protocols effectively. 7. Continuously Update Protocols 7.1. Adapt protocols based on technological advancements and feedback from stakeholders.		

4. Regular Audits and Reporting: Require organizations to conduct regular audits of their AI systems and report on performance, safety, and ethical compliance.	1. Establish Audit Standards 1.1. Define clear criteria for evaluating AI systems, including performance, safety, fairness, and ethical compliance. 1.2. Tailor standards to industry-specific requirements and risks. 2. Mandate Audit Frequency 2.1. Require periodic audits (e.g., annually or bi-annually) for all operational AI systems. 2.2. Increase audit frequency for high-risk or critical systems. 3. Require Transparent Reporting 3.1. Develop templates for organizations to report audit findings, highlighting compliance, risks, and mitigation efforts. 3.2. Make key results accessible to stakeholders and regulators. 4. Engage Independent Auditors 4.1. Encourage the use of third-party auditors to ensure objectivity and credibility. 4.2. Establish accreditation standards for audit firms specializing in AI. 5. Implement Regulatory Oversight	AI regulator	Planning: 2027 Q4 – 2028 Q2 Implementation: 2028 Q3 - continuous

	5.1. Create a central regulatory body to review audit reports, track compliance, and enforce corrective actions. 5.2. Impose penalties for non-compliance or incomplete reporting. 6. Support Organizations 6.1. Provide resources, tools, and training to help organizations conduct effective audits. 6.2. Share best practices to improve audit quality across industries. 7. Update Processes Regularly 7.1. Revise audit and reporting requirements based on technological advancements and feedback.		
5. Bias Mitigation Programs: Develop initiatives to identify and reduce biases in AI models, particularly to prevent discrimination and promote equity.	1. Establish Guidelines 1.1. Define standards for identifying and addressing bias in AI models. 2. Implement Bias Audits 2.1. Mandate regular evaluations of AI systems for fairness and equity. 3. Develop Tools and Resources 3.1. Provide open-source tools for bias detection and mitigation. 4. Offer Training Programs	AI regulator AI policy maker	Planning: 2026 Q4 – 2027 Q2 Implementation: 2027 Q3 - continuous

	4.1. Educate developers and stakeholders on bias prevention techniques. 5. Monitor and Adapt 5.1. Continuously improve programs based on advancements and feedback.		
6. Public Input Mechanisms: Create channels for public participation in discussions about AI deployment and its societal impacts	1. Establish Engagement Platforms 1.1. Create online portals and community forums for public feedback on AI initiatives. 2. Host Public Consultations 2.1. Organize town halls, webinars, and workshops to discuss AI deployment and societal impacts. 3. Use Surveys and Polls 3.1. Collect public opinions through targeted surveys on AI-related policies and applications. 4. Promote Awareness 4.1. Educate the public on AI technologies to facilitate informed participation. 5. Incorporate Feedback 5.1. Regularly review and integrate public input into AI policy-making and deployment plans.	AI regulator	Planning: 2026 Q2 – 2026 Q3 Implementation: 2026 Q3 - continuous
Objective 7: Promoting International Alignment and Sustainability			

1. Global Standards Alignment: Ensure that Lesotho's regulations are in line with international best practices to facilitate trade, collaboration, and data-sharing agreements.	1. Review International Standards 1.1. Study global AI regulations, such as GDPR, OECD AI Principles, and UNESCO guidelines, to identify relevant frameworks. 2. Adapt Local Regulations 2.1. Align Lesotho's AI policies and regulations with international best practices, ensuring compatibility for trade and collaboration. 3. Engage with Global Bodies 3.1. Participate in international AI forums and working groups to stay updated and contribute to global standard development. 4. Establish Data-Sharing Agreements 4.1. Create legal frameworks that facilitate secure cross-border data exchange in line with international norms. 5. Monitor and Update Regulations 5.1. Continuously review and update local regulations based on evolving international standards and emerging technologies.	AI policy maker AI regulator	Planning: 2026 Q4 – 2027 Q2 Implementation: 2027 Q3 - continuous
2. Participation in Global Forums: Engage in international AI policy discussions to stay	1. Identify Key Forums 1.1. Select relevant global AI policy forums, such as OECD, G7, or AI-	AI policy maker AI regulator	Planning: 2026 Q4 – 2027 Q2

informed on emerging trends and adapt to global norms.	related UN initiatives, for engagement. 2. Delegate Representation 2.1. Appoint government representatives, experts, and stakeholders to actively participate in discussions and knowledge exchange. 3. Monitor Trends 3.1. Regularly track emerging AI trends, policies, and best practices shared in these forums. 4. Adapt National Policies 4.1. Align local AI policies with global norms and trends based on insights gained from international participation. 5. Foster Global Collaboration 5.1. Build partnerships with international organizations to collaborate on AI research, regulation, and ethical standards.		Implementation: 2027 Q3 - continuous
3. Regional AI Partnerships: Work with neighbouring countries and regional bodies to share knowledge, resources, and best practices.	1. Identify Regional Stakeholders 1.1. Engage neighboring countries, regional bodies, and local institutions to form AI collaboration networks. 2. Establish and Join Knowledge-Sharing Platforms	AI policy maker AI regulator	Planning: 2026 Q4 – 2027 Q2 Implementation: 2027 Q3 - continuous

	2.1. Create forums, workshops, and joint research initiatives to exchange AI knowledge and expertise. 3. Collaborate on Policy Development 3.1. Develop shared AI policies and best practices that address regional challenges and opportunities. 4. Pool Resources and Infrastructure 4.1. Collaborate on AI infrastructure, funding, and research to maximize regional impact. 5. Foster Cross-Border Projects 5.1. Launch joint AI initiatives to solve common regional issues and improve socio-economic development.		
4. Global AI Initiatives: Engage in international AI summits and collaborations to stay updated on global standards and advancements	1. Identify Key Summits and Collaborations 1.1. Select major international AI summits, conferences, and partnerships to participate in, such as the Global AI Summit or World Economic Forum. 2. Send Delegates and Experts 2.1. Ensure representation from government, industry, and academia to actively engage in discussions and partnerships. 3. Track Global Advancements	AI policy maker AI regulator	Planning: 2026 Q4 – 2027 Q2 Implementation: 2027 Q3 - continuous

	3.1. Stay informed on cutting-edge AI trends, regulatory developments, and technological breakthroughs. 4. Contribute to Global Dialogue 4.1. Actively share local insights and innovations to influence global AI discussions and policies. 5. Implement Learnings Locally 5.1. Adapt and integrate international best practices, standards, and advancements into national AI strategies.		

	Indicator	Baseline	Intermediate Targets	End Target
		2025	2028	2030
1.	AI governance establishment (AI policy maker, AI regulator, Data and AI Committee)	0	3	3
2.	Research funding	To be assessed	30% increase	50% increase
3.	AI research groups in universities	0	1	2
4.	Trained policymakers and public officials	10	100	All policy makers and public officials
5	Updated school curricula	0	5	All
6	Updated university programs	0	50%	100%
7	Participants of upskilling and reskilling programs	0	100	500

8	Educational portal	0	1	1
9	TV programs	0	1	1
10	Social media campaigns (channels)	1	3	3
11	Community events per year	2	4	5
12	Research exchanges per year	0	3	5
13	Innovation fund (establish and increase funding)	0	1 (20%)	1 (50%)
14	Regulatory sandbox	0	1	1
15	R&D hubs	0	0	1
16	Channel for public input	0	1	1
17	Participation in the global forums (events) per year	2	4	4

6.3 IMPLEMENTATION RISKS AND MEASURES FOR MITIGATION

Note for challenges related to risk assessment and mitigation measures for the Policy Implementation. [21]

Acknowledging the importance of each Objective and measures to be taken considering the principles, the key challenges should be indicated to evaluate the risk of the Policy not being implemented in the context of agreed measures or time. The key challenges are:

1. **Stakeholder coordination**: insufficient coordination might result in potential delays in aligning priorities and ensuring consensus among all involved parties.
2. **Resource limitations**: ensuring sufficient financial, human, or technical resources to support timely and effective implementation. Lack of any of these resources might result in an inability to achieve the intended Objectives within the agreed timeline.
3. **Regulatory and market situation**: Unforeseen changes or delays in the regulatory framework or market dynamics might affect the planned content or timeline.
4. **External circumstances**: Geopolitical, technological, or economic factors might cause unforeseen delays or need for readjustments.

Risk assessment is vital to properly monitor the Policy and Implementation plan. Planned mitigation measures enable a timely response to ensure that the Objectives are reached without significant deviation. Mitigation measures are usually divided into preventive actions to reduce the likelihood of risks, comprehensive mechanisms to identify issues early, corrective steps to address problems as they arise, risk transfer where the responsibility is passed to other parties, and contingency plans to minimize their impact and ensure continuity. As per Policy, the mitigation measures should be considered:

- **Collaborative approach**: foster close collaboration and information distribution among stakeholders to ensure the commitment to the target and respective measures.
- **Proactive monitoring**: implement a robust progress monitoring framework with regular reporting and assessment milestones.
- **Timely identification of issues**: establish mechanisms to detect insufficient progress early, taking into account agility, and enabling corrective actions to be taken without undue delays.
- **Clear accountability and transparency**: define roles and responsibilities clearly to ensure accountability at every stage of implementation. The Policy encourages that relevant authorities from different frameworks should be involved in processes from the very beginning of the processes (even before legislative initiatives) to ensure a proper level of collaboration and capacity building during and after the adoption of particular requirements.

[21] The consultant proposes for the MICSTI to consider including this note - although it might sound repetitive, considering the principles, that risk assessment stems from, the key point is to acknowledge risk and take measures accordingly.

7. ANNEXES

7.1. ANNEX NO. 1 INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

1. Lessons from the best practices worldwide

1.1. European Union

The European Union (EU) has developed one of the world's most comprehensive approaches to artificial intelligence regulation, primarily through the AI Act, which officially entered into force on August 1, 2024. This legislation establishes a risk-based regulatory framework to govern AI development and deployment while safeguarding citizens' rights, health, and safety.

Key Aspects of the EU AI Act:

1. Risk-Based Approach:
   1.1. Minimal Risk: Applications like spam filters or AI-enabled games have no mandatory obligations.
   1.2. Limited Risk: Systems such as chatbots must disclose that users are interacting with AI.
   1.3. High Risk: Areas such as healthcare or recruitment require stringent oversight, including quality data standards and human oversight mechanisms.
   1.4. Unacceptable Risk: Practices like AI-driven "social scoring" or harmful biometric surveillance are banned outright.
2. General-Purpose AI (GPAI):
   2.1. The Act includes provisions for GPAI systems like large language models. A Code of Practice is under development to ensure transparency, copyright compliance, and risk management. This will be enforced by the EU's newly established AI Office.
3. Timeline:
   3.1. Full compliance for most provisions begins in 2026, though bans on prohibited uses and initial rules for GPAI are effective sooner.
4. Broader Goals:
   4.1. Promote innovation while ensuring AI aligns with EU values such as privacy, human rights, and fairness.
   4.2. Create a harmonized regulatory environment to foster cross-border AI deployment within the EU.
5. The EU AI Act is a model for balancing technological progress with ethical concerns and is seen as a global benchmark for AI regulation.

Key references to European Union AI policies and regulations:

1. Overall EU approach to AI[22], which provides a comprehensive compendium of diverse EU policies and documents.
2. The EU AI Act[23],[24].

[22] European Commission, "European approach to artificial intelligence," // https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/european-approach-artificial-intelligence.
[23] Directorate-General for Communication, "AI Act enters into force," 1 8 2024 // https://commission.europa.eu/news/ai-act-enters-force-2024-08-01_en.
[24] European Parliament, "Artificial Intelligence Act," European Parliament, 2024 // https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0138_EN.pdf.

2.1. Risk-Based Framework: The Act categorizes AI systems into four risk levels: minimal risk, limited risk, high risk, and unacceptable risk. High-risk systems face strict compliance requirements, while unacceptable-risk AI practices, such as social scoring, are banned.

2.2. General-Purpose AI (GPAI): Includes provisions for large models like ChatGPT to ensure transparency, safety, and ethical use.

2.3. Implementation Timeline: Entered into force in August 2024, with full application expected by 2026, after a phased rollout.

3. Ethical Guidelines for Trustworthy AI by the High-Level Expert Group on AI, these guidelines focus on promoting human-centric AI by emphasizing fairness, transparency, and accountability in AI applications[25].

4. Related policies, such as GDPR[26] and Digital Services Act (DSA)[27].

5. OECD.AI Policy Observatory, a Global Partnership on AI[28].

1.2. Lithuania

Lithuania has adopted a strategic yet evolving approach to AI policy and regulation, leveraging national and European frameworks to align with technological advancements and address potential risks. The key elements of Lithuania's AI policies and regulatory initiatives are the following:

1. Strategic Objectives.

1.1. Research and Innovation: Lithuania focuses on strengthening its AI research ecosystem through initiatives like the establishment of national research centres, fostering AI adoption in sectors such as manufacturing, healthcare, and agriculture, and encouraging collaboration between public and private stakeholders[29], [30].

1.2. Education and Skills Development: AI education is emphasized at all levels, from early schooling to advanced degrees. Initiatives include updating STEM education, promoting AI in vocational training, and offering lifelong learning opportunities[31].

2. Regulatory Framework.

2.1. Ethics and Trust: Lithuania is working on establishing an AI ethics committee and developing ethical guidelines to ensure transparency, fairness, and safety. The regulatory framework is designed to align with the upcoming EU AI Act and other European standards[32].

2.2. Testing Environments: Regulatory sandboxes are being created to allow testing and piloting of AI solutions within controlled conditions, fostering innovation while managing risks. The Innovation Agency is responsible for this topic in Lithuania.

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[25] European Commission, "Ethics guidelines for trustworthy AI," European Commission, 2019 // https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai.

[26] European Parliament, "Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (GDPR)," 27 4 2016 // https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj.

[27] European Parliament, "Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (GDPR)," 27 4 2016 // https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj.

[28] ECD, "Policies, data and analysis for trustworthy artificial intelligence," // https://oecd.ai/en/.

[29] A. Macijauskienė, V. Stančikė and R. Jankauskytė, "AI, Machine Learning & Big Data Laws and Regulations 2024 – Lithuania," Global Legal Insights, 2024 // https://www.globallegalinsights.com/practice-areas/ai-machine-learning-and-big-data-laws-and-regulations/lithuania/.

[30] European Commission, "National strategies on Artificial Intelligence: Country Report - Lithuanian," The European Commission's Science and Knowledge Service, 2020 // https://ai-watch.ec.europa.eu/countries/lithuania/lithuania-ai-strategy-report_en/.

[31] European Commission, "National strategies on Artificial Intelligence: Country Report - Lithuanian," The European Commission's Science and Knowledge Service, 2020 // https://ai-watch.ec.europa.eu/countries/lithuania/lithuania-ai-strategy-report_en/.

[32] AI Watch, "Lithuania: Public Sector dimension of AI Strategy," 2019 // https://ai-watch.ec.europa.eu/topics/public-sector/public-sector-dimension-ai-national-strategies/lithuania-public-sector-dimension-ai-strategy_en.

3. Public Sector Integration.

   3.1. AI is being integrated into public administration to enhance efficiency and citizen services. This includes building an AI-friendly data environment, improving data management, and enabling public-private partnerships. GovTechLab[33] initiative is providing services and support for the different public entities interested in deploying and using AI.

4. Data and Infrastructure.

   4.1. Lithuania has initiated a centralized open data hub to improve the accessibility and usability of data for AI systems, adhering to FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) principles[34].

5. Alignment with EU Policies:

   5.1. The country is actively preparing for the implementation of the EU AI Act, which will provide a uniform regulatory structure across member states while addressing local needs[35],[36].

6. Lithuania has certain elements of enabling policies and regulations, such as GDPR, Information systems, etc.

Lithuania is still working on its standalone national AI legislation yet; these strategies and recommendations position it as a forward-thinking participant in the global AI ecosystem.

1.3. Compendiums of the best international practices

Based on today's best AI practices the following items are of the utmost importance in developing AI policies.

1. Adopt a Risk-Based Framework

   Categorize AI systems based on their risk to safety, privacy, and societal impact. For example, the EU AI Act classifies AI into minimal, limited, high, and unacceptable risk categories, applying stricter regulations to higher-risk systems.

2. Ensure Transparency and Explainability

   Mandate that AI systems provide clear explanations of how decisions are made, especially in sensitive areas like healthcare or legal settings. Transparency builds public trust and accountability.

3. Prioritize Ethical AI Development

   Implement guidelines to promote fairness, prevent bias, and ensure AI respects fundamental rights. The OECD AI Principles emphasize human-centric AI, benefitting society without causing harm.

4. Protect Data Privacy and Security

   Integrate data protection laws like the GDPR into AI policies to ensure ethical handling of data, protect user privacy, and prevent unauthorized exploitation

[33] GovTech Lab, "GovTech Lab," 2024 // https://govtechlab.lt.
[34] AI Watch, "Lithuania: Public Sector dimension of AI Strategy," 2019 // https://ai-watch.ec.europa.eu/topics/public-sector/public-sector-dimension-ai-national-strategies/lithuania-public-sector-dimension-ai-strategy_en.
[35] GovTech Lab, "GovTech Lab," 2024 // https://govtechlab.lt.
[36] A. Macijauskienė, V. Stančikė and R. Jankauskytė, "AI, Machine Learning & Big Data Laws and Regulations 2024 – Lithuania," Global Legal Insights, 2024 // https://www.globallegalinsights.com/practice-areas/ai-machine-learning-and-big-data-laws-and-regulations/lithuania/.

5. Establish Clear Governance Structures

   Create independent oversight bodies to monitor AI use, enforce compliance, and provide recommendations. For example, the EU AI Act introduces an AI Board to ensure consistent implementation across member states

6. Promote Responsible Innovation

   Provide incentives and regulatory sandboxes for testing AI in controlled environments to encourage innovation without compromising safety.

7. Engage Stakeholders

   Involve diverse stakeholders, including governments, industry, academia, and civil society, in policymaking to address broad perspectives and ensure policies are practical and inclusive.

8. Address Socio-Economic Impacts

   Develop strategies for workforce reskilling, upskilling, and social protections to mitigate the economic impacts of AI-driven automation.

9. Encourage International Collaboration

   Work with global organizations like the UN, OECD, or GPAI to align AI regulations and standards, facilitating cross-border innovation and mitigating risks like AI misuse. In the case of Lesotho, cooperation with neighbouring countries and regional unions such as South Africa, The African Union[37], the Southern African Development Community[38], the Commonwealth[39], and the African Development Bank[40] could be beneficial.

10. Focus on Education and Awareness

    Promote AI literacy through public campaigns and education systems to ensure citizens understand and responsibly engage with AI technologies.

7.2. ANNEX NO. 2 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. Roles and responsibilities of the main stakeholders

Roles and responsibilities of the main stakeholders are provided in Table 1. Roles and Responsibilities of the Main Stakeholders in AI Governance. However, it is important to mention, that tight cooperation of all the stakeholders is a must to secure the smooth implementation of responsible AI governance in Lesotho, e.g. only joint groups can ensure such activities as follows:

1. Data Sharing Agreements: Establish frameworks for securely sharing data across sectors.
2. Joint Research Initiatives: Combine resources from academia, government, and private sectors for impactful AI research.
3. Public AI Committee, consisting of actors outlined in the table below:

[37] The African Union, "The African Union," // https://au.int/en/.
[38] The Southern African Development Community, "The Southern African Development Community," // https://www.sadc.int.
[39] Commonwealth Secretariat, "The Commonwealth," // https://thecommonwealth.org.
[40] African Development Bank, "African Development Bank," // https://www.afdb.org/en.

Table 1. Roles and Responsibilities of the Main Stakeholders in AI Governance

No.	Stakeholder	Description
1.	Government (MICSTI as a representative of the government)	The government is the primary driver of AI governance, responsible for policymaking, regulation, and implementation. 1. Policy Development: Draft and implement AI policies and national strategies that align with Lesotho's development goals. 2. Legislation: Enact laws on AI ethics, data protection, privacy, and intellectual property. 3. Funding and Support: Allocate resources for AI research, innovation, and public sector adoption. 4. Regulatory Oversight: Establish regulatory bodies to oversee AI deployment, ensure compliance with laws, and mitigate risks. 5. Public Services: Use AI to improve healthcare, education, agriculture, and public administration. 6. Collaboration: Partner with international organizations, regional bodies, and private companies to ensure best practices and resource-sharing.
2.	Regulatory Authorities	Independent or semi-autonomous regulatory bodies ensure compliance with AI policies and address ethical, legal, and technical challenges. 1. Ethics Oversight: Monitor the ethical use of AI, preventing discrimination, bias, and misuse. 2. Data Governance: Oversee the secure and fair use of data, ensuring adherence to privacy regulations. 3. Standards Development: Define technical and operational standards for AI systems. 4. Risk Management: Identify and mitigate risks associated with AI deployment in critical sectors. 5. Dispute Resolution: Address conflicts or complaints related to AI systems and their impact.
3.	Academia and Research Institutions	Universities and research organizations contribute to capacity building, innovation, and critical analysis of AI governance frameworks. 1. Research and Development: Conduct AI-related research in areas like natural language processing, predictive analytics, and ethical AI design. 2. Capacity Building: Develop curricula and training programs to upskill the workforce in AI technologies. 3. Policy Advisory: Provide evidence-based recommendations to inform policymaking and governance frameworks. 4. Collaboration: Partner with international institutions to enhance local research capabilities and knowledge exchange.

		5. Ethical Studies: Explore the social, economic, and ethical implications of AI in Lesotho's context.
4.	Private Sector	Companies, startups, and tech firms play a pivotal role in driving innovation, investing in AI technologies, and creating practical applications. 1. Innovation: Develop AI solutions tailored to local challenges (e.g., agriculture, healthcare, financial inclusion). 2. Adherence to Standards: Ensure compliance with national and international AI regulations and ethical standards. 3. Data Sharing: Collaborate with public and research sectors to provide datasets for training AI models, while respecting privacy laws. 4. Investment: Invest in AI research, infrastructure, and workforce development. 5. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Partner with the government on AI-driven projects to improve public services.
5.	Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	CSOs and NGOs advocate for the ethical use of AI and ensure that vulnerable populations are not left behind in the AI revolution. 1. Advocacy: Promote the ethical and inclusive use of AI while highlighting risks such as bias, inequality, or exclusion. 2. Awareness Campaigns: Educate citizens about AI, its benefits, and potential risks. 3. Monitoring and Accountability: Act as watchdogs to hold governments and private entities accountable for the responsible use of AI. 4. Community Engagement: Ensure the voices of marginalized communities are included in AI policymaking. 5. Capacity Building: Provide training and resources for communities to understand and benefit from AI technologies.
6.	International Organizations and Development Partners	Global organizations and partners provide technical, financial, and policy support to help Lesotho establish its AI governance framework. 1. Technical Assistance: Provide expertise and resources for drafting policies, setting standards, and building infrastructure. 2. Capacity Building: Support training programs and workshops to enhance local expertise in AI. 3. Funding: Offer financial aid or grants for AI research, innovation hubs, and governance projects. 4. Knowledge Sharing: Share international best practices and facilitate collaboration with other countries and regions. 5. Policy Alignment: Help Lesotho align its AI governance framework with international standards, such as the OECD

		AI Principles or UNESCO's AI Ethics Guidelines, African Union policies, etc.
7.	Media and the Public	The media and citizens play a crucial role in shaping public discourse, promoting transparency, and holding stakeholders accountable. 1. Media: 1.1. Educate the public about AI and its implications. 1.2. Investigate and report on potential misuse or ethical breaches in AI systems. 1.3. Facilitate dialogue between stakeholders and the public. 2. Citizens: 2.1. Provide feedback on AI systems and governance policies. 2.2. Advocate for transparency, fairness, and inclusivity in AI applications. 2.3. Participate in public consultations and discussions to shape AI policies.