

# 2024 Q3 AI IN AFRICA SUMMARY REPORT



Navigating Policy, Innovation & Capacity Building



**OCTOBER 2024**



At Convergence, we are dedicated to fostering the adoption of AI in Africa, mainly for economic growth and transformation through innovation, research and development, advising policies, and collaboration with key stakeholders. We aim to utilize AI as a catalyst for holistic growth and economic transformation on the continent.

This report was gathered through desk research of various African initiatives from July to September 2024, the year's third quarter (Q3).

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## List of Abbreviations

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<b>AI</b>	Artificial Intelligence
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>EAC</b>	East Africa Community
<b>NHIS</b>	National Health Insurance Scheme
<b>AUDA</b>	African Union Development Agency
<b>ASTII</b>	African Science, Technology, and Innovation Indicators
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>GIRAI</b>	Global Index on Responsible AI
<b>AWS</b>	Amazon Web Services
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>FMCIDE</b>	The Federal Ministry of Communication, Innovation and Digital Economy
<b>NITDA</b>	National Information Technology Development Agency
<b>NCC</b>	Nigerian Communications Commission
<b>GBB</b>	Galaxy Backbone Limited
<b>NAIS</b>	National Artificial Intelligence Strategy
<b>METC</b>	The Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council
<b>KRA</b>	Kenya Revenue Authority
<b>MCIT</b>	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
<b>WIUC</b>	Wisconsin International University College

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# 1. Executive Summary

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AI developments in Africa in Q3 are characterized by accelerated growth, increased international collaboration, and a surge in strategy/policy advancements. Key highlights include the IMF launching the AI Preparedness Index, the African Union adopting the Continental AI Strategy, and establishing numerous AI initiatives across various sectors.

Internationally, major tech giants and global organizations intensified their engagement in Africa's AI ecosystem. Notable developments include Meta's commitment to supporting AI-driven organizations through its Llama Impact Innovation Awards, NVIDIA's partnership with Pariti to train African developers, and UNESCO's collaboration with HUAWEI to enhance AI education.

On the policy front, African nations demonstrated a proactive approach to AI governance. The IMF's AI Preparedness Index provided valuable insights into the continent's readiness for AI adoption, while the East African Community (EAC) Bloc adopted a comprehensive roadmap for responsible AI implementation. Additionally, countries like Algeria, Nigeria, and South Africa made significant strides in developing their national AI strategies and policies, with Zambia promising to launch its National AI strategy on its Independence Day, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

Innovation and development flourished in Q3, with AI applications expanding across diverse sectors. From the Nigerian Petroleum Ministry's adoption of AI for efficiency to Ghana's NHIS using AI for claim audits, the continent witnessed an increase in AI-driven solutions. Furthermore, the establishment of AI research centers, partnerships between universities and technology companies, and the integration of AI into various government services showcased the growing potential of AI in Africa.

Education and capacity building remained a priority, with initiatives like NVIDIA's investment in AI hardware and UNESCO's AI movement's Summer Camp empowering individuals and organizations. The continent also witnessed a surge in AI training programs, fostering a skilled workforce capable of driving AI innovation.

## 2. AI Around Africa

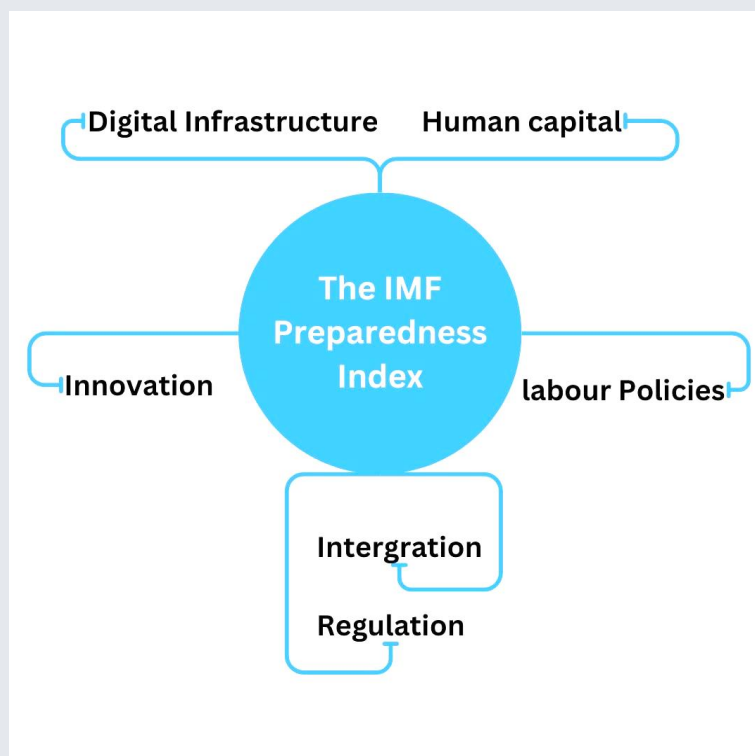
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Africa has grown tremendously throughout the Q3, with some vital events being the quarter's highlights.

### 2.1. Launch of the AI Preparedness Index by the IMF

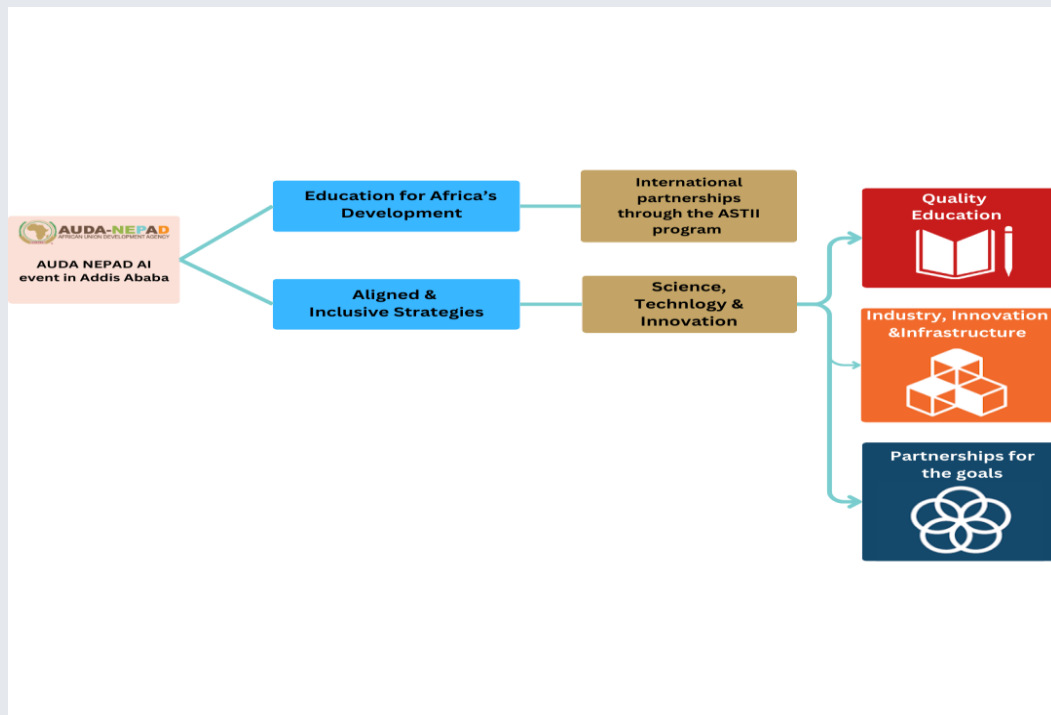
The International Monetary Fund launched its AI Preparedness Index in Q3, highlighting how countries have prepared for AI adoption. The index tracked 174 economies based on their digital infrastructure, human capital, labor policies, innovation, integration, and regulation.

African countries, Emerging market economies, and low-income countries proved to have smaller shares of high-skilled jobs than advanced economies. As a result, these regions are likely to be less affected and face fewer immediate disruptions from AI.



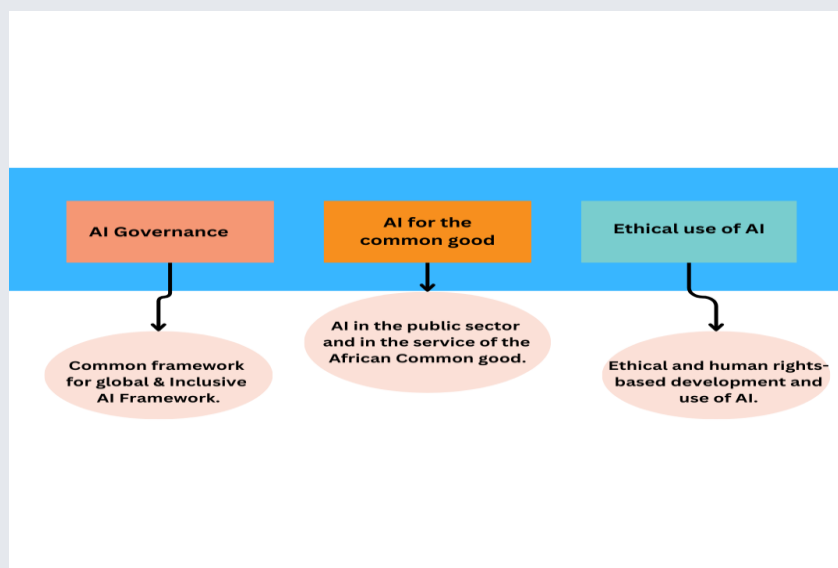
## 2.2. AUDA-NEPAD AI event in Addis Ababa

The African Union (AU) recently celebrated its AU Theme of the Year through innovation and partnerships. The event focused on how education and technology can drive Africa's development, particularly regarding AI and international partnerships in higher education through the African Science, Technology, and Innovation Indicators (ASTII) program. It also highlighted the alignment of AU frameworks on education and science, technology, and innovation (STI) with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Quality Education (SDG 4), Industrialization, Innovation, and Infrastructure (SDG 9), and International Partnerships for Sustainable Development (SDG 17).



### 2.3. The Rabat Consensus

The first High-Level Forum on AI in Africa occurred from June 3rd to 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at the Mohammed VI Polytechnical University of Morocco in Rabat. The event resulted in establishing the AI Movement as a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO and launching the African Consensus of Rabat on Artificial Intelligence. A community of key African players committed to a consensus and agreed on three founding principles that will mobilize institutions across the continent.



### 2.4. EAC Roadmap for AI Implementation

Following the completion of The Eastern Africa sub-regional forum on AI and Sustainable Development in Eastern Africa in Nairobi under the moderation of the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, the key highlight of the event was the adoption of the EAC Roadmap for AI Implementation which emphasized on the following key factors;

- ✓ Commitment to developing knowledge in line with African ethical values to understand the social and technological implications of AI, facilitating work with different stakeholders
- ✓ Facilitate policy dialogues at every level to mitigate the digital divide and encourage building governance mechanisms to monetize data collected from African people.
- ✓ Strengthen the capacity of government, civil society, and the private sector to understand the use of AI technologies and applications.
- ✓ Expand investment towards infrastructure development to address cutting issues for AI. Establish ICT innovation and technology hubs and incubation centers.

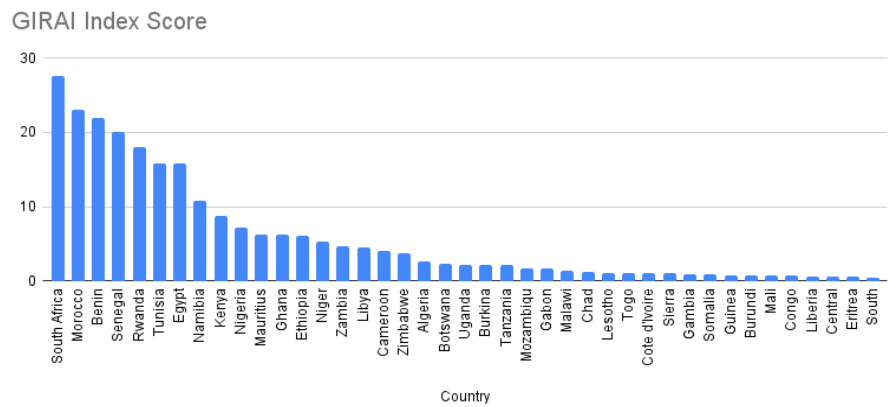


## 2.5. The Global Index on Responsible AI(GIRAI)

The Global Index on Responsible AI(GIRAI) is a multidimensional tool measuring progress towards responsible AI in 138 countries and jurisdictions. GIRAI launched its 2024 report in Q3, which aided in assessing Africa’s readiness for AI adoption and its commitment to ethical AI practice.

The GIRAI scores focused on a country’s responsible AI implementation, measured through nineteen thematic areas. Each thematic area assesses the performance of three pillars of the responsible AI ecosystem:

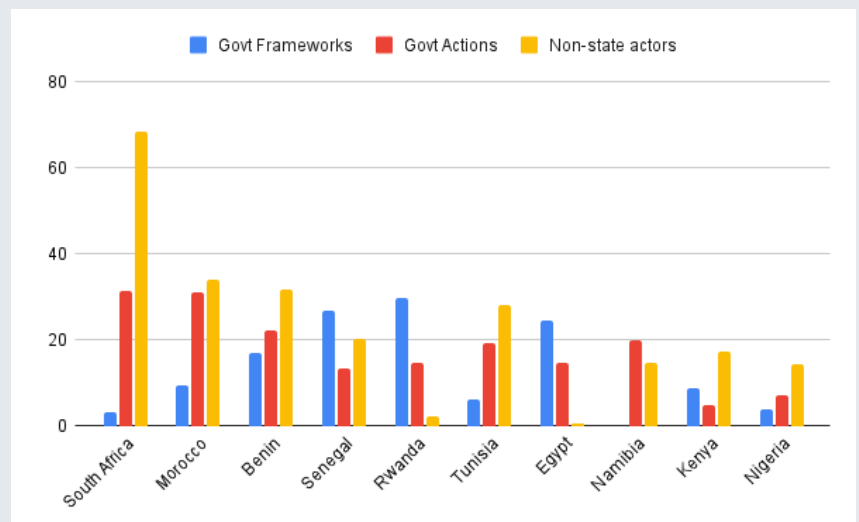
Government frameworks, government actions, and non-state actors’ initiatives. This multifaceted approach offered a comprehensive view of how African countries have taken part in addressing AI adoption’s ethical and societal implications.



### GIRAI pillars

Analyzing government frameworks, actions, and non-state actors across the top 10 African countries regarding AI readiness reveals diverse approaches and strengths. South Africa took the lead with a robust ecosystem driven predominantly by non-state actors (68.53), while its government frameworks (3.26) lagged significantly behind its government actions (31.5).

This pattern of non-state actor involvement was also mirrored in Morocco and Tunisia, suggesting a pivotal role for the private sector, academia, and civil society in advancing AI initiatives. Conversely, countries like Rwanda and Egypt showcased robust government frameworks (29.74 and 24.62, respectively) but minimal non-state actor involvement, indicating a more government-led approach to AI development and governance.



### 3. International Actors

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International actors also played a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of AI development in Africa. These entities, ranging from governments to multinational corporations, contributed to the continent's technological advancement through various means. Governments were actively engaged in promoting the responsible use of AI in Africa. The US government, for instance, emphasized the importance of ethical AI development and adherence to international laws through initiatives such as the visit of the Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Deterrence, and Stability. Moreover, the United States and Nigeria co-hosted a pan-African AI conference in Lagos to foster dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders on AI development and its implications.

Multinational tech giants also made significant contributions to AI development in Africa. Google, for example, expanded Google Translate to include 110 new languages, including a substantial number from Africa (Fon (primarily spoken in Benin); Kikongo (Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Angola); Luo (Kenya and Tanzania); Ga (South Eastern Ghana); Wolof (Senegal); Siswati (Eswatini and South Africa); Tshivenda (South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique); Afar (Djibouti, Eritrea, and Ethiopia); NKo (Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso and some other West African countries); Tamazight (also known as Amazigh and spoken in Morocco and Algeria).), demonstrating its commitment to making AI accessible and inclusive. Additionally, Infinix, UNESCO, and Google partnered to launch CogLabs, an AI and robotics education program in Kenya, which utilized affordable materials to make AI and robotics accessible to young people.

Meta's Llama 3.1 Impact Grants program was another example of how multinational corporations leveraged AI for social good. The program aimed to support organizations using AI to address global challenges in Africa, the Middle East, and Turkey. Meanwhile, AWS and Huawei announced significant investments in cloud and AI infrastructure in Africa, demonstrating their confidence in the continent's potential for technological growth.

International organizations and partnerships also played a crucial role in driving AI development in Africa. The OECD's pilot to monitor the application of the G7 code of conduct on advanced AI development was a significant step in ensuring responsible and ethical AI development. Furthermore, the Commonwealth Secretariat's training program for educators in The Gambia exemplifies how international organizations could contribute to building AI research capacity in African nations.

Through government initiatives, multinational tech investments, and international partnerships, they contributed to the continent's technological advancement, fostered innovation, and addressed pressing challenges. As AI continued to evolve, these actors' contributions were essential in shaping Africa's digital future.

## 4. Policy and Regulation

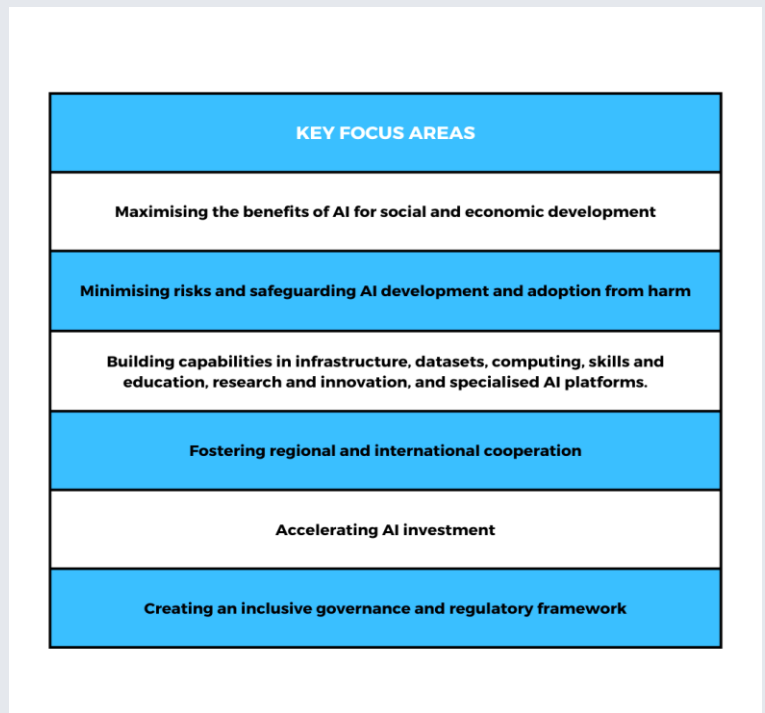
The third quarter of 2024 witnessed a surge in AI-related policy and regulatory developments across Africa. State governments demonstrated significant efforts to establish comprehensive frameworks that promote responsible AI adoption, mitigate risks, and harness the technology's potential for economic growth and societal development. This concerted effort has positioned several African countries alongside global leaders in AI governance.

### 4.1. The Continental AI Strategy.

One of the highlights of the quarter was the endorsement of the continental AI strategy by the African Union in Accra, Ghana, on July 18-19, 2024. The strategy represents a significant milestone in Africa's journey towards harnessing the power of Artificial Intelligence, outlining shared goals, priorities, and guidelines. It aims to foster collaboration, promote ethical AI practices, and ensure that AI benefits all African citizens.

#### **Focus Areas of the AI Strategy**

The continental AI strategy focuses on several key areas to ensure its success. These include maximizing the benefits of AI for social, economic, and cultural development while minimizing risks and safeguarding AI development and adoption from harm. To achieve these goals, the strategy prioritizes building capabilities in infrastructure, datasets, computing, skills and education, research and innovation, and specialized AI platforms. Additionally, it fosters regional and international cooperation and accelerates AI investment. Finally, the strategy aims to create an inclusive governance and regulatory framework that promotes responsible and ethical AI development.



## **Key Pillars of the Strategy**

- Infrastructure Development

The strategy emphasizes robust digital infrastructure as the foundation for AI adoption. This includes expanding internet connectivity, deploying 5G networks, and improving data storage and processing capabilities. These are critical for ensuring African countries can effectively leverage AI technology to boost economic growth and improve public services.

- Policy and Regulatory Frameworks

A harmonized regulatory environment is a critical element of the strategy. The AU envisions creating a pan-African regulatory framework that encourages innovation while safeguarding against misuse, such as biased algorithms or data breaches. National governments must align with these continental regulations to promote cross-border cooperation and innovation.

- Capacity Building and Skills Development

To fully harness the power of AI, Africa must develop local talent. The strategy calls for the establishment of AI-focused educational programs and research institutions. This includes supporting initiatives that teach AI and data science skills from primary to postgraduate education. The long-term goal is to generate African AI practitioners, researchers, and entrepreneurs.

- Ethical AI Development

Africa's AI strategy strongly emphasizes the ethical use of AI. This means ensuring that AI is deployed in ways that respect privacy, avoid discrimination, and prioritize the needs of African communities. Ethical considerations also involve addressing data sovereignty and ensuring that African data is used and stored responsibly.

- Partnerships and Collaboration

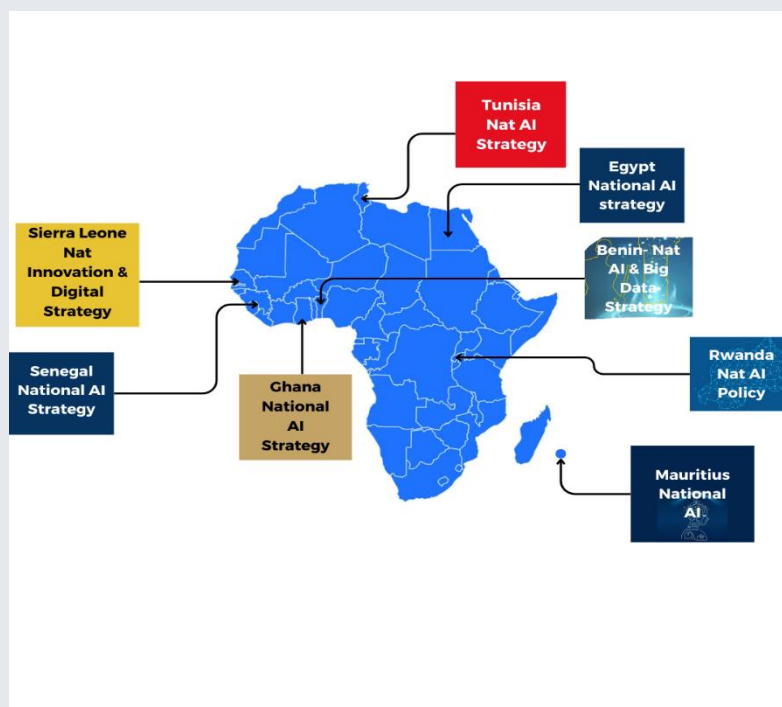
The strategy calls for strong partnerships between African countries and international AI players. Collaboration with global tech companies, research institutions, and governments is vital to accelerating AI development across the continent. These partnerships aim to bring in expertise, investment, and technology transfers.

## 4.2. The State of AI Strategies and Policies in Africa

### 4.2.1. Highlighting Countries with Existing AI Strategies and Policies

Several African countries have taken proactive steps to develop national AI strategies and policies, recognizing the transformative potential of AI and the importance of establishing frameworks for its responsible and ethical adoption. These strategies serve as roadmaps for AI development, guiding government initiatives, promoting innovation, and ensuring that AI benefits are equitably distributed.

While Rwanda has a dedicated AI policy, countries like Benin, Egypt, Ghana, Mauritius, Senegal, Tunisia, and Sierra Leone have implemented AI strategies that outline their vision and priorities for AI development. These strategies provide a comprehensive framework for guiding AI initiatives, addressing potential challenges, and maximizing the benefits of AI for their respective nations.



#### 4.2.2. Enactment of New Strategies and Regulations

Several African countries took significant strides in developing AI policies and regulations during the third quarter. These initiatives aim to establish frameworks that promote responsible AI adoption, mitigate risks, and harness the technology's potential for economic growth and societal development.

##### South Africa National AI Policy

South Africa's Department of Communications and Digital Technologies published a national AI policy framework for economic growth and societal well-being to promote AI integration. The framework outlines a strategic approach to harnessing AI's potential for economic growth, societal development, and addressing National challenges.

Additionally, the policy focuses on nine strategic pillars

- Talent Development
- Digital Infrastructure
- Research, Development, and Innovation
- Public Sector Implementation
- Ethical AI Guidelines Development
- Privacy and Data Protection
- Safety and Security
- Transparency and Explainability
- Fairness and Bias Mitigation

## Nigeria National AI Strategy

Nigeria also joined the list of countries with National AI Strategies after the Federal Ministry of Communication, Innovation and Digital Economy (FMCIDE), National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Galaxy Backbone Limited (GBB), and other stakeholders published the draft National Artificial Intelligence Strategy (NAIS).

The NAIS sets out specific strategic objectives for leveraging AI in various sectors. These include improving agricultural productivity, reducing food insecurity, and promoting sustainable farming practices in agriculture; enhancing healthcare delivery, improving disease diagnosis and treatment, and developing personalized medicine in healthcare; improving access to quality education, personalizing learning experiences, and enhancing teaching and assessment methods in education; promoting financial inclusion, improving risk management, and enhancing customer experience in finance; increasing manufacturing efficiency, improving product quality, and driving innovation in manufacturing; improving transportation safety, efficiency, and sustainability in transportation; and enhancing national security, combating crime, and protecting critical infrastructure in security.

The comprehensive National AI Strategy also outlines five key pillars that will propel Nigeria towards achieving its vision-driven progress across the AI development and adoption spectrum.

- ✓ Building Foundational AI Infrastructure
- ✓ Building and Sustaining a World-class AI Ecosystem
- ✓ Accelerating AI Adoption and Sector Transformation
- ✓ Ensuring Responsible and Ethical AI Development
- ✓ Developing a Robust AI Governance Framework

## Other Policy & Regulations Developments

Algeria outlined its strategic vision for AI implementation at the World AI Conference in Shanghai, including establishing a Scientific Council for AI and specialized academic institutions. In Ethiopia, the government ratified a policy promoting the use of AI for financial inclusion and national security, addressing various sectors such as water, energy, agriculture, and healthcare. The Council of Ministers also passed a resolution to implement the National AI Policy, which was developed through a benchmarking process and engagement with industry professionals.

The Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council (METC) also called for public input on the National AI Policy, seeking feedback on key focus areas, economic and social impacts, and ethical concerns. In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Communication, Innovation, and Digital Economy and other stakeholders published the National AI Strategy Draft, setting a path for responsible and inclusive AI innovation. Lastly, the Moroccan government proposed new legislation to regulate AI use, addressing potential risks and criminal activities associated with social media.



## 5. Innovation and Development

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### 5.1. Government AI Adoptions

African governments increasingly embrace AI to enhance efficiency, improve service delivery, and drive innovation across various sectors. From natural resource management to healthcare and public services, AI is leveraged to address pressing challenges and unlock new opportunities.

#### **Nigeria**

The Ministry of Petroleum Resources announced the adoption of AI in exploration and production processes to boost efficiency in the oil and gas sector. This initiative aligns with a presidential directive to unlock the energy sector for sustainable development. Additionally, the Nigerian Navy is exploring using AI to strengthen its operational capacity and keep pace with technological advancements in the maritime industry.

In Lagos State, accountants employed by the Lagos State Government are integrating AI into their operations to enhance service delivery and improve the efficiency, accuracy, and overall quality of financial services provided to residents.

#### **Morocco**

Morocco has taken significant steps to integrate AI into government operations. The Justice Ministry is revolutionizing the court system by using AI to enhance efficiency, improve judicial quality, and facilitate access to justice. This will be achieved using “a mechanism that allows automatic conversion of speech to written text, which will help judges draft judgments in less time, thus speeding up the execution of remaining judicial procedures.”

The Moroccan Ministry of Finance has also been integrating AI into its operations, including customs. AI is used to analyze data and predict potential fraud in customs declarations. In Taxation, AI-powered chatbots assist taxpayers, enhance tax fraud detection, and streamline tax filing processes. The ministry is also developing an AI-powered geographic information system (GIS) to manage state-owned land and assets efficiently. For budgetary management, the ministry has created an AI-powered chatbot for its e-budget system and uses AI to enhance employee collaboration and productivity. The ministry is considering using AI to analyze images from scanners to improve the efficiency of cargo inspections.

#### **Ghana**

Ghana's National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) is set to deploy Artificial Intelligence to improve claim audits. This initiative aims to streamline the claims process, improve accuracy, and potentially reduce fraudulent activities across a vast network of healthcare providers. The NHIS currently operates with

support from 5,232 facilities and 4 million health service providers, underscoring the significant scale of this AI implementation.

### **Mauritius**

Mauritius is planning a digital transformation of its National Assembly by embracing AI Technology. The strategy will involve implementing AI chatbots, interactive tools, live transcription, and speech translation to improve public engagement and efficiency. This digital transformation also aims to create a more transparent and accessible parliament.

### **Kenya**

The Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) is also planning to leverage Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine Learning (ML) to modernize the tax system and boost revenue collection. This initiative is expected to benefit taxpayers and significantly boost revenue mobilization efforts.

### **Zimbabwe**

The Zimbabwean Government has also announced its plan to use AI in Job recruitment. This was based on an announcement by the Public Service Commission, which stated that the government would soon implement artificial intelligence to shortlist candidates for interviews. The PSC also highlighted the need for universities to produce graduates who are fit for purpose in their specific field.

### **Egypt**

Egypt has also shown interest in integrating AI in courtrooms with an AI-powered speech-to-text transcript system. This was outlined in a cooperation protocol signed between the ministries of justice and communication and information technology. The AI-powered engine, developed by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), will automatically document court session records, improving the efficiency of writing transcripts, the MCIT said in a statement.

## 6. Education and Capacity Building

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### 6.1. Research centers & Data Centers developments

The continent is witnessing a surge in the development of research and data centers dedicated to AI. These initiatives are crucial for fostering innovation, building capacity, and driving the adoption of AI technologies across various sectors. From Nigeria to Tanzania, countries are investing in these infrastructure developments to position themselves as regional leaders in AI.

Tanzania is making significant technological strides by constructing its first Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics information storage center, funded by the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA). This center will serve as a repository for data and knowledge related to AI and robotics, fostering Tanzania's journey towards becoming a technology hub in the region.

Kenya has emerged as East Africa's digital hub by launching an AI-ready data center, a joint venture between Schneider Electric and Nairobi-based IXAfrica Data Centers. This state-of-the-art facility, known as "NBOX1," is the largest and most technologically advanced digital habitat for cloud, colocation, and connectivity in East Africa.

Ghana has also made notable advancements. The Wisconsin International University College (WIUC-Ghana) launched a Cybersecurity, Digital Forensic, and AI laboratory in Accra, equipped with cutting-edge technology to enhance industry-academia collaboration and foster partnerships.

Nigeria is taking a comprehensive approach to AI and blockchain development. The government announced plans for nationwide AI and blockchain research centers, targeting critical areas such as IoT, UAVs, additive manufacturing, AI, and robotics. Additionally, the Nigerian government established a N100 million AI Fund to support local startups in the AI ecosystem.

Zambia is partnering with Google to establish an AI Centre of Excellence at the University of Zambia. This facility aims to provide young innovators with opportunities to develop solutions to the country's societal challenges.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has made significant strides in digital infrastructure by launching its biggest data center. This investment is a crucial component of the nation's Plan National du Numérique, which aims to drive digital inclusion, foster private sector growth, and transform public services through digitalization.

Ethiopia is also making progress in AI research. The Council of Ministers approved a new regulation for its first AI research center, which is expected to engage in activities that would safeguard national interests and create a conducive environment for AI startups.

## 7. Q4 Outlook

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Q4 2024 is another exciting period for AI development and adoption in Africa. One of the key highlights is the anticipated launch of Zambia's national AI strategy on October 24th, coinciding with the country's Independence Day. This strategy will outline the government's vision for AI development, identify key priorities, and establish guidelines for responsible AI adoption.

In addition to Zambia's AI strategy launch, several other significant events and developments are anticipated in Q4;

- ✓ Implementation of National AI Strategies

Countries that recently launched new AI strategies and policies or amended existing ones are expected to commence implementing their newly adopted national AI strategies. This will provide a clear roadmap for responsible AI adoption and guide investments in critical areas like infrastructure, research, and talent development.

- ✓ Strengthened Regional Collaboration

After the launch of the Continental AI Strategies, African nations are likely to intensify their collaborative efforts on AI development. This could involve joint research initiatives, knowledge-sharing programs, and the establishment of regional AI hubs.

- ✓ Expansion of AI Applications and Innovations

AI is anticipated to make further inroads into various sectors, including agriculture, healthcare, finance, education, and transportation. We expect to see a rise in AI-powered solutions addressing critical challenges and optimizing processes across these domains.

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