

Insights

DECODING THE UK'S AI AMBITIONS: UNPACKING THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE AI OPPORTUNITIES ACTION PLAN

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A couple of weeks ago, the Government declared that it would be implementing all 50 of Matt Clifford's recommendations in his 'AI Opportunities Action Plan' ([AI Opportunities Action Plan - GOV.UK](#)), issued last year. In 2024, Clifford, a tech entrepreneur, was commissioned by the Labour Government, to produce an analysis on ways of fostering AI innovation in the UK and has since been appointed as the Prime Minister's 'Adviser on AI Opportunities'.

We have set out the 6 salient action points from the government's [response](#) to the AI Opportunities Action Plan, that should shape the course of AI investment in the UK in 2025 and beyond.

Unfortunately, the Government did not provide any further clarification on the AI regulatory regime which it intends to develop, aside from reiterating its plan to reform the UK's copyright law to accommodate text and data mining and striving to reach a balance that supports both the AI sector and the creative industries. Although the Labour Government used its first King's Speech in July 2024 to highlight that it would "establish the appropriate legislation to place requirements on those working to develop the most powerful artificial intelligence models", progress on this front appears to have stalled for the time being. Clearly, the Government's current focus is on AI innovation, fast-paced growth and investment, and it appears that as a primary concern, the AI regulatory regime in the UK will need to support (and not hinder) these objectives.

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE AI OPPORTUNITIES ACTION PLAN

The Government has agreed to endorse the following:

1. BUILDING AI INFRASTRUCTURE

- Increasing sovereign compute capacity by at least 20x by 2030.
- Doubling the capacity of the UK's national AI Research Resource (building on the Isambard AI and Dawn supercomputers at Bristol and Cambridge Universities, respectively).

2. ENCOURAGING PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN AI GROWTH ZONES

- Designating areas of the UK with enhanced access to power and support for planning approvals. The first designated AI Growth Zone will be at Culham, Oxfordshire (the HQ of the UK Atomic Energy Authority).
- Building out AI Data Centre - the Government is seeking a private-sector partner to develop one of the UK's largest AI data centres. This is one of several AI public procurement tenders due to be publicised this year.
- This is in addition to the £25 billion private sector investment in new UK data centres that has been announced since July 2024.
- Appointment of AI Sector Champions in key industries such as life sciences, financial services, and the creative industries, to focus on creating AI adoption plans for those sectors together with the Government.

3. NEW AI ENERGY COUNCIL TO BE ESTABLISHED

- Formed of industry leaders to provide advice on AI energy needs, including new and sustainable energy solutions.

4. ENHANCED DATA ACCESS

- Creation of a National Data Library.
 - Making public sector data assets more accessible in an ethical way to support AI innovation.
 - Considering the strategic collection of new data to enhance research in specific growth areas.

5. FOSTERING AI TALENT

- Supporting scholarship and fellowship schemes to increase diversity of talent in AI.
- Equipping the UK workforce with AI knowledge and skills.
- Attracting and retaining world class AI experts, including by bolstering the bench strength of the AI Safety Institute, by taking a proactive approach to the AI talent pipeline.

6. UK REGULATORS

- UK regulators will need to publish annually the ways in which they have facilitated innovation and progress driven by AI in their particular sectors.

- This demonstrates a notable shift from regulators regulating AI to actually facilitating the use of AI.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR BUSINESSES?

The outlook for AI-focused businesses, operating in the UK, is a positive one. There appear to be ample opportunities for the private sector to take advantage of the pro-AI landscape. However, it will likely be another few months until the first AI legislation draft will reach Parliament for review and only then will we have a better idea of the proposed breadth and depth of the proposed AI regulatory regime.

MEET THE TEAM



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