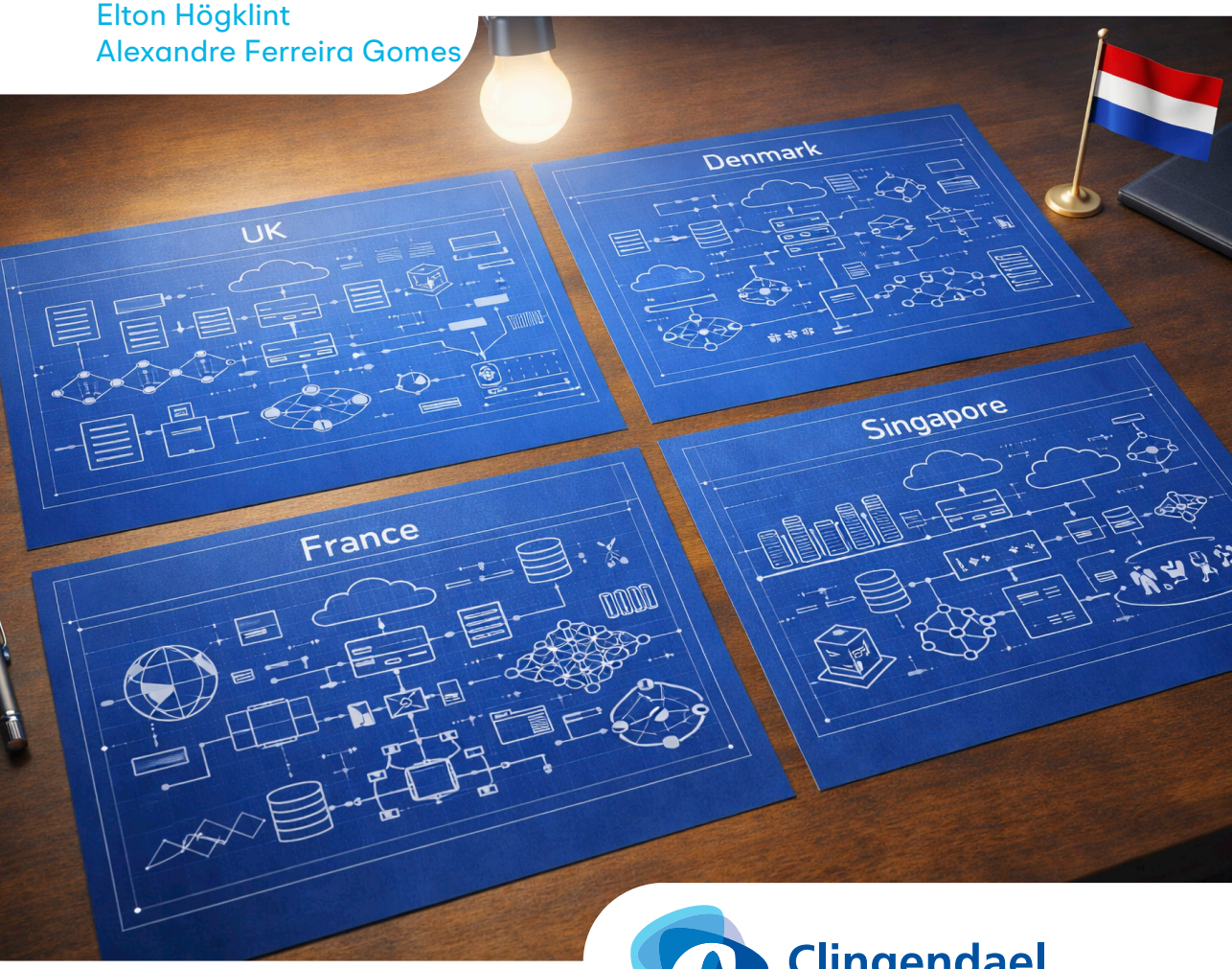
Inspiration for AI Diplomacy

A Glance at the AI Strategies of the United Kingdom, Denmark, France, and Singapore

Maaike Heijmans
Elton Högklint
Alexandre Ferreira Gomes

Clingendael Report



Clingendael
Netherlands Institute of International Relations

Clingendael

Netherlands Institute of International Relations

Inspiration for AI Diplomacy

A Glance at the AI Strategies of the United Kingdom, Denmark, France, and Singapore

Maaike Heijmans
Elton Högklint
Alexandre Ferreira Gomes

Clingendael Report
April 2026

Disclaimer and acknowledgements
Research for, and the production of, this report was conducted for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Responsibility for the content and the opinions expressed rests solely with the authors and does not constitute, nor should be construed as, an endorsement by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

April 2026

About the Clingendael Institute

The Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' is a leading think tank and academy on international affairs. Through our analyses, training and public platform activities we aim to inspire and equip governments, businesses, and civil society to contribute to a secure, sustainable and just world.

The Clingendael Institute
P.O. Box 93080
2509 AB The Hague
The Netherlands

Follow us on social media
@clingendaelorg
The Clingendael Institute
The Clingendael Institute
clingendael_institute
Clingendael Institute

Email: info@clingendael.org
Website: www.clingendael.org

About the authors

Maaike Heijmans is a Senior Research Fellow at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' in The Hague, where she leads the 'Geopolitics of Technology and Digitalisation' programme. She is also a Visiting Lecturer in the Master of Science in International Relations and Diplomacy (MIRD) programme at the University of Leiden.

Elton Högklint is a Research Assistant with Clingendael's 'Geopolitics of Technology and Digitalisation' programme and a Masters of International Relations and Diplomacy (MIRD) student, a degree offered jointly by Leiden University and the Clingendael Institute.

Alexandre Ferreira Gomes is a Research Fellow at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' in The Hague, where he is part of the EU and Global Affairs Unit and of the 'Geopolitics of Technology and Digitalisation' programme.

Contents

Executive summary

In preparing to launch its forthcoming artificial intelligence (AI) diplomacy strategy, the Netherlands would benefit from a better understanding of leading peers' (international) strategies and AI governance structures. This Clingendael Report contributes to this objective by offering an exploratory analysis of key initiatives and governance structures of the United Kingdom, Denmark, France, and Singapore. These countries stand out for their strong AI policies or their leadership in sub-fields such as AI safety.

The case studies show that the United Kingdom (UK) has adopted a laissez-faire attitude towards AI, aligning with the United States (US) and focusing on attracting foreign investors. While this comes with development gains, it also poses risks to data sovereignty. The UK does have a notable 'AI Security Centre' focused on research around emerging AI risks and AI auditing, but it has recently withdrawn from international consensus-building efforts. Denmark's approach consists of cultivating AI use across society in accordance with Danish values, with a particular focus on AI in the public sector and not so much in the private sector. Despite its focus on domestic sovereignty and risk management, it has made limited efforts internationally. France's strategy somewhat resembles the underpinnings of the US's DARPA program, focusing on funding a wide range of potentially good ideas instead of funnelling all investment into one project. This has led to the emergence of competitive startups, research hubs, and a pronounced international presence. However, this wide-scope approach means that France lacks centralised AI governance structures and has spread mandates across existing bodies. Singapore has a strong emphasis on safety, standards, and guidelines, and enables bottom–up development and testing of (open-source) models. It designates specific strategic niches in which it can carve out and sustain an edge and where it focuses its efforts. Its international presence is characterised both by its consensus-seeking efforts, and through providing a model for developing a well-rounded AI strategy using limited resources.

While these four countries are frontrunners in specific domains, AI strategy and governance is an emerging field. The Netherlands would do well, first and foremost, to chart its path forward based on its own interests, priorities, and niches for AI development and not simply seek to replicate existing strategies.

Introduction

This report analyses the (international) AI strategies and AI governance structures of several leading countries, which can offer inspiration for Dutch AI diplomacy and governance.[1] The selected countries are chosen for their strong AI policies or their leadership in sub-fields such as AI safety.

The selected countries are:

- The United Kingdom (UK): an investment giant with a light regulatory approach and a state-backed AI Security Institute (AISI);
- Denmark: an early mover in developing an extensive public national AI strategy and developing the resources to execute it;
- France: a European leader of AI ecosystems and international cooperation, home to Europe's leading large language model (LLM) contender, Mistral;
- Singapore: a relatively small country with a substantial economy and a pronounced presence in particular AI niches.

This study is exploratory in nature: it maps various AI strategies to produce a concise overview of partner-country policies from which the Netherlands can draw best practices and engage. Each country's description starts with an overview of the most striking policy initiatives and strategies, followed by reflections on their international components and efforts at AI investment promotion. Next, the case studies reflect on AI governance. To ease comparison, our findings are then summarised in spiderweb diagrams and followed by reflections on future steps for the Netherlands.

Two important caveats are in place from the outset. First, most of the policies and initiatives examined are newly minted. This renders any meaningful evaluation as premature. Second, each of the selected countries invests relatively heavily in the AI ecosystem. Doing so is a significant policy decision; some countries, especially those that are already behind on developing grand AI foundation models, may do better to keep funding theoretical research and developing niche AI applications.

1 The authors wish to thank Jelle van den Wijngaard for his contribution to an early version of this report.

This report is thus about exploring what selected countries do, rather than arguing for a certain path forward.

The Netherlands: quo vadis?

In the European context, the Netherlands was a relatively early mover when it came to determining its governmental response to AI development. In October 2019, the Netherlands released its Strategic Action Plan for Artificial Intelligence, which was designed to strengthen Dutch competitiveness in AI on the global market.[2] The Netherlands has also succeeded in positioning itself as a governance leader for ethical and safe AI adoption in the military domain. In 2023, the Dutch government co-hosted the first of a series of Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (REAIM) summits in The Hague, and has shown leadership in the Global Commission REAIM.[3] Beyond the military domain, the Netherlands in 2024 published its Vision on Generative AI, which lays out how AI should be responsibly governed to benefit society as a whole.[4] Additionally, governing AI and algorithms was assigned to the portfolio of the Minister for the Digital Economy and Digital Sovereignty.[5]

As for specific government-funded projects, Dutch research and technology organisations TNO, NFI, and SURF combined forces into research and work towards establishing a sovereign large language model (LLM).[6] As a result, the Dutch-language GPT-NL was launched in late February 2026 – with transparent and ethical data sourcing – and is a significant step towards applying Dutch values to the AI landscape, as well as strengthening the already strong position of the Netherlands in AI research.[7] While GPT-NL is currently being piloted within government agencies, a wider rollout for private organisations will take

2 European Commission, *Netherlands AI Strategy Report*, 1 September 2021.
3 The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, Global Commission on Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (GC REAIM).
4 Government of the Netherlands, 'Dutch Government Presents Vision on Generative AI', 18 January 2024; and Government of the Netherlands, 'Strengthening Global Opportunities for Dutch AI', 22 January 2026.
5 Government of the Netherlands, 'Minister for the Digital Economy and Digital Sovereignty'.
6 See TNO; Netherlands Forensic Institute (NFI); and SURF.
7 GPT-NL, 'Een verantwoord alternatief'.

place in the second half of 2026.[8] Seeking to bolster AI research and small-scale deployment, in 2025 the Netherlands secured investment – with European Union (EU) co-financing – for a Dutch AI factory in the Groningen region. The Netherlands is also seeking to develop an AI giga factory in South Holland to ensure capacity for edge research and large-scale model training and deployment.

Moreover, the Netherlands has also set up innovation hubs to bolster its technological growth capabilities, such as Brainport in Eindhoven.[9] Exploring opportunities to bring Dutch AI strengths to international markets, the Dutch government has commissioned studies focusing on developed partner countries as well as on strategic developing countries.[10]

While these initiatives are proving to be a good start, some critics believe more focus and investment are required. Notable reports published in 2025 on the Dutch AI and tech ecosystem, such as Invest NL's *AI Deep Dive* and the *Wennink Report*, stress the importance of focusing on the Netherland's niches in policy and investment decision-making.[11] Those reports highlight technological niches within data, applications, and research, but there are also non-technical aspects in which the Netherlands can refine its expertise.

As the home of international legal institutions such as the International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the Netherlands has the potential to become a key hub in the multilateral legal governance of AI. This is especially important as these institutions increasingly need to adapt to technological developments in their own operations. Building on its position as a governance leader through REAIM, the Netherlands can also benefit from the renowned diplomatic academy at Clingendael Institute, which has trusted partnerships from all around the globe. This has already positioned the

8 GPT-NL, 'Veelgestelde vragen'; and NL Times, 'Dutch Government Agencies to Pilot Homegrown AI Model GPT-NL', 26 February 2026.

9 Brainport Industries Campus, 'Brainport Eindhoven'.

10 EY-Parthenon, *Project Export.AI*, January 2026; Alexandre Gomes and Maaike Okano-Heijmans, *Connecting the Dots: Linking Digital Global Gateway to local sector-specific needs*; and Maaike Okano-Heijmans and Alexandre Ferreira Gomes, *Digital Global Gateway Matchmaking: A Dutch Case Study to Bolster European Action*, Clingendael Policy Brief, 30 November 2023.

11 Invest NL, *AI Deep Dive: Strategic Investing in the Age of Intelligence*, 27 November 2025; and Peter Wennink, *Rapport Wennink*, 12 December 2025.

Netherlands as an approachable and neutral training and discussion partner on a wide variety of international issues, which could come to include AI capacity building, knowledge sharing, and risk management.

Critically, as AI is increasingly impacting the economy, military, and national security, as well as the democratic foundations of its society, the Netherlands now faces a challenge – namely, creating a government-wide governance structure that facilitates a comprehensive AI strategy that can be effectively implemented domestically and in an EU context.

The purpose of this overview of the AI strategies and governance structures of four countries is to enable Dutch policymakers to draw inspiration from existing initiatives in other countries and apply them to the state of play in the Netherlands. Going forward, in developing its AI diplomacy, particular attention should be paid to how specific components of other countries' strategies can be used to bolster the aforementioned Dutch niches and opportunity areas within AI development.

The United Kingdom

Since 2021, the UK government has been vigorously promoting AI adoption and safety research.[12] To that end, it has established a range of strategies, institutions, and investment programmes; a selection of which will be identified below. Notably, the UK government adopts a broad scope approach: facilitating development of the necessary infrastructure and promoting AI deployment within the public sector. Government and businesses collaborate closely with the US and Big Tech corporations.[13] Despite previous engagement in international consensus-building efforts,[14] the UK joined the US in refusing to sign an international agreement on AI at the AI Action Summit in Paris in 2025, citing a risk of overregulation that would stifle innovation.[15]

AI institutes in the UK

To promote AI research and risk evaluation, the United Kingdom hosts two noteworthy AI institutes. The first is the national AI Alan Turing Institute. Established in 2015 as a joint venture involving several UK universities, its original remit covered data science in the broadest sense. Over time, the institute's focus has shifted decisively towards artificial intelligence and it is now a world-class research institute in the field.

The second key institute is the AI Security Institute. Housed within the UK Department of Science, Innovation, and Technology, this institute focuses primarily on emerging AI risks such as control and alignment issues.[16]

12 Government of the United Kingdom, *National AI Strategy*, 22 September 2021.

13 Government of the United Kingdom, 'Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland regarding the Technology Prosperity Deal', 18 September 2025; and Government of the United Kingdom, 'US–UK Pact will Boost Advances in Drug Discovery, Create Tens of Thousands of Jobs and Transform Lives', 16 September 2025.

14 Government of the United Kingdom, 'About the AI Safety Summit 2023 – GOV.UK', 2023.

15 BBC, 'UK and US Refuse to Sign International AI Declaration', 11 February 2025.

16 Alignment in the context of AI refers to ensuring that the systems reliably act as they are intended, without unintended or harmful behaviours that could arise from issues in input data or algorithm configuration; see 'About the Alignment Project – by AISI (The AI Security Institute)'.

The AI Security Institute has also developed the AI safety evaluation platform 'Inspect', which enables testers – from startups, academia, and AI developers to international governments – to assess specific capabilities of individual models.[17] Called the AI Safety Institute at its inception, the institute was renamed in 2025 while the Munich Security Conference was ongoing. The timing suggests that the name change sought to avoid the appearance of adjudicating ethical issues such as freedom of expression, which might have ruffled feathers in the US.[18] Nevertheless, the AI Security Institute constitutes a strong AI safety and auditing research initiative.

AI-related strategic documents

In January 2025, the UK published the ***AI Opportunities Action Plan*** as its foundational AI strategy. The plan is heavily focused on promoting and making investments,[19] and (among other elements) included a £2 billion government initiative for building AI infrastructure, such as data centres and supercomputers.[20] It also designates investments in nuclear energy to meet the resulting power demand in a relatively green manner.

The United Kingdom also released an ***AI Playbook*** in February 2025,[21] whose purpose is to advise the public sector on how to deploy and audit AI safely and effectively.

In July 2025 the UK government published a ***Compute Roadmap***,[22] outlining how it intends to expand AI research capacity and lower barriers to spending in AI infrastructure, further promoting investment.

17 Government of the United Kingdom, 'AI Safety Institute Releases New AI Safety Evaluations Platform', 10 May 2024.

18 *Politico*, 'Britain Dances to JD Vance's Tune as it Renames AI Institute', 14 February 2025.

19 UK Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology, 'AI Opportunities Action Plan', 13 January 2025.

20 UK Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology, 'UK Compute Roadmap', 17 July 2025.

21 Government of the United Kingdom, 'Launching the Artificial Intelligence Playbook for the UK Government', 10 February 2025.

22 UK Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology, 'UK Compute Roadmap', 17 July 2025.

International cooperation and the use of Brexit in support of a pro-innovation approach

The UK is leveraging Brexit to adopt a pro-innovation stance, diverging from what it regards as the EU's too heavily regulated landscape.[23] Several draft bills have been put on hold, including a major one to set up an 'AI Authority' to centralise AI regulation, leaving regulation virtually absent.[24] This appears to be a strategic move to appease US-based investors – particularly those aligned with President Donald Trump's agenda and the Silicon Valley community – and to attract American capital. However, this comes with risks regarding data privacy and sovereignty, as the UK has not created its own alternatives to EU regulation on these matters.

Additionally, the stalled draft bills are themselves deliberately cautious, targeting only the most advanced AI models. Nonetheless, the broader societal implications of AI, including for the creative industries and intellectual-property rights, remain contentious and form a central part of the societal debate in the UK.[25] When it comes to international consensus-seeking, the AI Opportunities Action Plan is limited, beyond expressing a desire to cooperate with 'like-minded' countries. An illustration of this is the United Kingdom's participation in the Horizon-Europe programme and EuroHPC, the EU's super-computing initiative. In addition, the UK government issued a *Trusted Third-Party AI Assurance Roadmap*[26] in September 2025, with the aim of safeguarding the UK's position as a leader in the independent verification of AI-system reliability.

AI governance structures

The UK's laissez-faire approach to AI has led it to have little AI-specific governance, beyond the UK Department of Science, Innovation, and Technology

23 For deeper insight, see European Parliament, *The United Kingdom and Artificial Intelligence*, April 2024.

24 UK Parliament, *Artificial Intelligence (Regulation) Bill*, 5 March 2025.

25 TIME, 'Exclusive: The British Public Wants Stricter AI Rules Than Its Government Does', 6 February 2025; and James Frith MP, 'AI and Intellectual Property – A Pivotal Moment for the UK's Creative Industries', 30 April 2025.

26 UK Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology, 'Trusted Third-party AI Assurance Roadmap', 3 September 2025.

(DSIT). In order to oversee the allocation of AI-related investments to companies and research projects and the management of AI partnerships with foreign firms, the UK created a Sovereign AI Unit within the DSIT in 2025. Examples of initiatives managed by the Sovereign AI Unit include the OpenBind consortium, the Encode AI Talent Fellowship, and several memorandums of understanding signed with Anthropic, NVIDIA, Cohere, and OpenAI to increase their engagement with UK industry, research, and the public sector.[27]

In the absence of other AI-specific governance bodies, existing agencies are encouraged to apply existing law and mandates to AI where applicable. For example, the Information Commissioner's Office has provided guidelines on data protection in AI systems, and the National Cyber Security Centre has issued guidance on the cyber-security risks of AI. The UK's Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standard also applies to AI.

27 Government of the United Kingdom, *Sovereign AI Unit*, 17 July 2025.

Denmark

The Danish government, like the United Kingdom, is actively promoting AI adoption and research. It employs a mix of strategies, institutes, and investment programmes to drive progress. Unlike the UK, however, Denmark operates under the EU's legal framework and takes a more sceptical stance towards Big Tech – an attitude reflected, for example, in the Danish study on Big Tech's role in AI adoption, as detailed below.

Strategic documents

Denmark has produced several strategic documents on AI. First, there is a general digitalisation strategy[28] in which AI plays a role. The document stays high-level: it calls for accelerated AI deployment, combining strong ambition with a major focus on responsible implementation, data privacy, and sovereignty. For the 2024–2027 period, a total of DKK 61 million (approximately 8 million euros) has been earmarked. The plan includes strategic investments in 'new, intelligent tools against economic crime', the creation of regulatory sandboxes, and the development of a Danish-language model.

More focused, and therefore more concrete than the digitalisation strategy, is the Danish AI strategy of December 2024.[29] It set out four core initiatives:

1. A **Digital Taskforce for Artificial Intelligence**, aiming to make the Danish public sector a world-leading example of AI use. The taskforce was established in 2024 and has outlined a vision for public-sector domains or focus areas that should be prioritised in its 'More Time for the Things That Matter' report.[30] The report focuses on addressing pressures on the welfare state, addressing labour shortages, improving citizen-business-public-sector interaction, and competency development. It also sets concrete targets, such as achieving a saving of at least 50 million hours – or roughly 30,000 full-time

28 Danish government and many opposition parties, 'Aftale om ambitiøs og ansvarlig strategi for Danmarks digitale udvikling', 8 February 2024.

29 Digitaliseringsministeriet, 'Strategisk indsats for kunstig intelligens', December 2024.

30 Taskforce for Kunstig Intelligens, 'Mere tid til det vigtige', June 2025.

equivalents – per year in the public sector by 2035, with a substantial portion of that reduction to be realised by 2030.

2. The **Centre for Artificial Intelligence in Society (CAISA)**, which was established in May 2025.[31] This centre works closely with the Pioneer Centre for Artificial Intelligence,[32] an academic research collective dedicated to AI. CAISA will make the insights generated by the pioneer centre accessible to the public and will disseminate knowledge and advice drawn from both research and practice, such as in its recent report on narratives surrounding Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). The aim is to generate an innovation boost, while staying mindful of safety concerns.
3. The launch of a secure platform for **developing open-source Danish-language models** that can comprehend the Danish language, as well as its norms and values. The platform, 'Danish Foundation Models' (DFM), was launched in 2024 as a joint project of Aarhus University, University of Southern Denmark, University of Copenhagen, and Alexandra Institute.[33] The platform has created multiple Danish-language models, including by simplifying the derivation of specialised, smaller models from larger ones.[34] These downstream models can be deployed by municipalities, hospitals, and similar public-service entities. Development adheres to strict data-protection standards and ensures full transparency throughout the process.
4. **Making Danish text data freely accessible**. Current large language models are mainly built by US tech firms using English-language and American datasets, which embed US norms and values and can thus undermine applicability in Denmark. The initial 2024 release of the DFM dataset comprised texts from the Danish National Archives, the Royal Library, and the Danish Parliament. By publishing these corpora as open-source resources, developers can readily train language models that reflect Danish linguistic characteristics, cultural norms, and societal values.

The four initiatives of the Danish government's AI strategy stem from the concern that most current AI developments originate from the 'large international tech giants'.[35] The Danes consider it crucial for Denmark (and Europe) to strengthen

31 CAISA – Det Nationale Center for Kunstig Intelligens i Samfundet.

32 Danmarks Grundforskningsfond, Pionercenter for Kunstig Intelligens, with 352 million euros for 'human-centred' AI research between 2021 and 2034.

33 Danish Foundation Models.

34 Models – Danish Foundation Models.

35 Digitaliseringsministeriet, 'Strategisk indsats for kunstig intelligens', December 2024, p. 10.

its position in AI development and chart a safe and responsible trajectory. Of the DKK 62.5 million (approximately 8.4 million euros) allocated for 2024–2027, funding will be directed to initiatives 2, 3, and 4 above. Initiatives 2 and 3 can additionally draw on DKK 40 million (~ EUR 5.4 million) from the 2025 research reserve. Finally, DKK 30.6 million (~ EUR 4.1 million) has been set aside for the Digital Taskforce from 2025–2027.[36]

AI strategy in an international context

Denmark's AI strategy only briefly considers the international dimension towards the end. In the international section, the emphasis is on Denmark's active engagement within the EU on AI consensus-seeking, its participation in the EU-wide LLM alliance ALT-EDIC, and its support for Danish actors seeking to use the EU's testing and experimentation facilities. However, beyond its AI strategy, Denmark also has a strategy for tech diplomacy in general, which holds significant relevance for AI as well.[37] The May 2024 revision of the Danish Tech Diplomacy Strategy outlines four strategic priorities:

1. Geopolitical engagement with the tech industry to strengthen dialogue, promote Europe as a technology leader, and represent Denmark's technological strengths on the international stage;
2. Responsible governance of emerging and critical technologies – such as AI and quantum – by investing in Danish expertise and contributing to the broader debate;
3. Contribute to a security–political collaboration on technology, for example within NATO and through cyber diplomacy;
4. Promote global norms and partnerships by strengthening the EU and advancing digital rights, standardisation, and technology cooperation.

Aside from this, Denmark was also the first country in the world to create an ambassadorial posting to manage relationships with Silicon Valley in the US. The purpose of the posting was to create networks between Silicon Valley and Europe.[38] However, as the relationship between Europe and Silicon Valley became less focused on commercial cooperation and more on regulation,

36 Digitaliseringsministeriet, 'Strategisk indsats for kunstig intelligens', December 2024, p. 10.
37 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 'Strategy', May 2024.
38 POLITICO, ''Techplomacy': Denmark's Ambassador to Silicon Valley'.

sovereignty, and risk management, Denmark reduced its ambassadorial presence in Silicon Valley to make room for a European Union operation.[39]

AI supercomputer

Denmark has operated its AI supercomputer 'Gefion' in Copenhagen since October 2024. The facility is financed through a public–private partnership, with the Danish government's national investment fund EIFO holding a 15 per cent minority stake[40] and the remainder being funded by the philanthropic enterprise fund, the Novo Nordisk Foundation. The supercomputer is accessible to select customers, primarily for use in the areas of quantum computing innovation, drug discovery, and the green transition.

AI governance structures

Aside from the aforementioned Digital Taskforce for Artificial Intelligence, the other major Danish governance body that handles AI is the Ministry of Digitalisation. The Ministry of Digitalisation was formed in 2022 and merged a selection of digitalisation-related tasks that were previously handled by the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Interior and Housing, and the Ministry of Industry, Business, and Financial Affairs.[41] While the ministry governs not only AI, AI is a major component of its mandate, and the ministry was the responsible authority for the 2024 Danish AI strategy. Other work by the Ministry of Digitalisation on Artificial Intelligence includes a mapping of AI initiatives in Denmark, a public consultation on the role of AI in the labour market, welfare, digital security, and democracy, and setting up the Danish Foundation Models project.[42]

39 POLITICO, 'Danish Tech Envoy's Parting Shot to Silicon Valley', June 2023.

40 Novo Nordisk Foundation, 'Denmark's First AI Supercomputer is Now Operational', 23 October 2024.

41 Altinget, 'Sådan flytter regeringen rundt på ressortområder', 15 December 2022.

42 Digitaliseringsministeriet, 'Strategisk indsats for kunstig intelligens', December 2024, pp. 15 and 18; and University of Copenhagen, 'Digitaliseringsministeriet bevilger samlet 30,7 millioner til ambitiøst dansk sprogmodels-projekt (in Danish)', 2 December 2024.

France

France's flagship LLM company, Mistral, positions the country at the forefront of LLM development on the European continent. In early February 2025, France stepped into the spotlight again by co-hosting the AI Action Summit in Paris alongside India. This high-profile event dovetails with France's ambitious goal of becoming a global AI leader.

AI convening power

The AI Action Summit in Paris was a major international event held in February 2025. The core program featured representation from political leaders, including French President Emmanuel Macron and US Vice-President JD Vance, alongside a variety of side forums. France hosted a follow-up event, the Adopt AI Summit, in late November 2025. While the AI Action Summit centred on government delegations, AI governance, and international consensus-seeking, the Adopt AI Summit shifted the focus to the private sector and explored opportunities for AI adoption and investment. Major AI players, including Meta, AWS, Mistral, and NVIDIA, were represented. Both summits have contributed towards positioning France as a leading AI nation.

National AI strategy

France's national AI strategy[43] was first drafted in 2017 and entered into force in 2018, which is relatively early by European standards for AI plans. Financially, the strategy is underpinned by the 'France 2030' plan[44] – a broader investment

43 Ministère de l'Économie des Finances et de la Souveraineté industrielle et énergétique, *La stratégie nationale pour l'intelligence artificielle*, 7 February 2025.

44 Ministère de l'Économie des Finances et de la Souveraineté industrielle et énergétique, *France 2030: un plan d'investissement pour la France*, 13 October 2023.

programme that aims to make France an innovation pioneer by 2030. Within this framework, almost 2.5 billion euros have been earmarked for the national AI strategy.[45]

The first phase of France's AI strategy (2018–2022) focused primarily on strengthening research capacity. Approximately 1.5 billion euros were invested to build an interdisciplinary AI research network, support AI professorships and excellence centres, fund doctoral projects, and provide computing power through the Jean Zay supercomputer. These investments helped France achieve the highest number of AI laboratories in Europe in 2021, with 81 facilities.

The second phase of the strategy (2022–2025) retained a research component but added dedicated funding to support a state-of-the-art AI offering in France and to match supply with demand. Resources were allocated to spur AI adoption among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and so-called 'mid-caps',[46] which in turn is expected to promote further investment, development, and innovation in priority domains.

In February 2025 France launched the third – and current – phase of its national AI strategy.[47] The aim is to give fresh impetus to AI development in the country, to which the two aforementioned AI summits are also expected to contribute. To further accelerate AI adoption and development, this phase focuses on:

- Constructing additional supercomputers and data centres, using France's abundant decarbonised energy supply (that is, nuclear power) and its strong connectivity to the rest of Europe and the world.
- Developing and attracting talent, by investing in education and research and investing in target niche areas where France seeks a decisive impact, such as Healthcare AI.
- Accelerating AI adoption across the public sector and for professions such as physicians and teachers, implemented through department-specific AI roadmaps. Enabling the government to act as a 'launch customer' for emerging AI solutions.

45 The strategy builds on a report primarily authored by Cédric Villani, a renowned mathematician who served as a deputy for Essonne in the French National Assembly, now commonly known as *Le Rapport Villani*: *Donner un sens à l'intelligence artificielle : pour une stratégie nationale et européenne*, March 2018.

46 Mid-caps are companies with a market value between $2 billion and $10 billion

47 French Government, 'IA: une nouvelle impulsion pour la stratégie nationale', 6 February 2025.

- Ensuring that AI is implemented in a controlled and equitable manner. France is investing in responsible, transparent, and explainable AI and in broad societal understanding of the technology.

AI governance structures

In February 2025, France created the European Institute for AI Testing and Security (INESIA).[48] Like much of the French strategy, this institute mainly facilitates coordination among existing initiatives, such as the National Agency for the Security of Information Systems, the National Institute for Research in Digital Science and Technology, the National Laboratory for Metrology and Testing, and the Digital Regulatory Expertise Hub. INESIA explicitly does not create a new legal body. It is governed by the General Secretariat of Defence and Security, on behalf of the French prime minister, and by the Directorate General for Enterprise of France's Ministry of Economics, Finance, and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty. Aside from its role as a coordinator, INESIA also conducts research on AI safety and auditing, both independently and in cooperation with other AI safety institutes.[49]

In line with the French approach of facilitating coordination among existing initiatives rather than setting up new bodies, three existing ministries are responsible for the implementation of France's national AI strategy. These are the Ministry of Economics, Finance, and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty, the Ministry of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Trade, Workmanship, Tourism, and Purchasing Power, and the Ministry of Public Action and Accounts.[50]

48 Ministère de l'Économie des Finances et de la Souveraineté industrielle et énergétique, 'La France se dote d'un Institut national pour l'évaluation et la sécurité de l'intelligence artificielle (INESIA)', 3 February 2025.

49 Campus France, 'The French Government Creates a National Institute to Assess and Secure AI', 10 February 2025; and PEReN, 'INESIA – Results of an AI agent evaluation exercise by the International Network of AI Safety Institutes', 30 July 2025.

50 Ministère de l'Économie des Finances et de la Souveraineté industrielle et énergétique, 'La stratégie nationale pour l'intelligence artificielle', 7 February 2025.

Singapore

Following its initial National AI Strategy in 2019, Singapore announced a follow-up National AI Strategy 2.0, which was adopted in 2023.[51] Singapore focuses on strong trust in AI and sees AI as a public good. It attempts to use AI to help people throughout society to upskill, rather than aiming only for optimisation and efficiency gains.

AI safety

Singapore's focus on AI safety is evident from its advanced AI Safety Institute[52] and its international positioning as a world leader in the field. For instance, the 2025 edition of Singapore's flagship AI conference was themed around AI safety. The conference resulted in the *Singapore Consensus on Global AI Safety Research Priorities*, marking the nation-state as a leader in both AI safety and auditing research, as well as in international consensus-seeking.[53]

Singapore hosts the AI Verify Foundation, which 'aims to harness the collective power and contributions of the global open-source community to develop AI testing tools to enable responsible AI. The Foundation promotes best practices and standards for AI'. Concrete initiatives include the launch and upkeep of:

- an AI Verify Testing Framework, which helps organisations assess their AI systems against international standards on responsible AI;[54]
- an AI Verify Toolkit, which includes a range of tools for testing AI systems, helping to ensure model reliability and fairness;[55]

51 Smart Nation Singapore, *NAIS 2.0 Singapore National AI Strategy*, 4 December 2023.

52 AISI – The Singapore AI Safety Institute.

53 Singapore Conference on AI, 'The Singapore Consensus on Global AI Safety Research Priorities', 8 May 2025.

54 AI Verify Foundation, 'AI Verify Testing Framework'.

55 AI Verify Foundation, 'AI Verify Toolkit'.

- an open-source LLM evaluation toolkit, Project Moonshot, that includes tools for LLM evaluation and testing. It helps developers and compliance teams with benchmarking and adversarial 'red team' testing.[56]

Sectoral focus and human-centred AI

The first of Singapore's National AI Strategy 2.0's twin goals is 'Excellence'. In this regard, Singapore acknowledges its limitations as a small country and has opted to focus on a designated range of strategic sectors, namely manufacturing, financial services, transport and logistics, and biomedical sciences. Focusing on these sectoral 'peaks of excellence' allows Singapore to maximise value creation in priority areas.

The second goal, 'Empowerment', refers to Singapore's wish for human-centred AI that aims to 'raise up individuals, businesses, and communities to use AI with confidence, discernment, and trust'.[57] To do so, the strategy focuses on trust-building by attempting to employ AI responsibly and ethically. It also emphasises AI trainings, both to enable research and development and to help people with AI adoption. As a result of these training initiatives, such as 'AI Singapore', 'TechSkills Accelerator', and 'SkillsFuture for Digital Workplace', Singapore now ranks very highly in AI skills and adoption rankings.[58] Furthermore, even though it is not mentioned in the strategy, the Singaporean National Research Foundation has also supported the development of SEA-LION AI, a family of open-source, multilingual, multimodal language models.[59]

56 AI Verify Foundation, 'Project Moonshot'; Red teaming is a simulation exercise in which a group attempts to intrude into or 'break' a system in order to find vulnerabilities. The group then reports back to the developers so the vulnerabilities can be fixed.

57 Smart Nation Singapore, *National AI Strategy*, 12 January 2026.

58 Govtech Singapore, *The History of AI – Part 2: Singapore's AI Journey*, 31 July 2025; *Asian Business Review*, 'Singapore Ranks Fourth in Global AI Readiness and Tech Skills', September 2025; and *Second Talent*, 'Top 10 Countries with Highest AI Adoption Rates in 2026', 17 December 2025.

59 SEA-LION.AI.

A systems-based approach: three systems, ten enablers and 15 actions

Singapore's 2.0 AI strategy seeks to accomplish its goals across three systems, in which, through ten enablers, 15 actions are taken. For example, one of the *systems* is 'Activity Drivers'. An *Enabler* in the 'Activity Driver' *system* is Industry. An *action* for the Industry *enabler* within the 'Activity Driver' *system* is to 'anchor new AI Centres of Excellence (CoEs) across companies and explore establishing Sectoral AI CoEs to drive sophisticated AI value creation and usage in key sectors'.

This systematic approach suits the core idea of attaining excellence in the above-mentioned key strategic sectors. It also helps in accomplishing the aim of empowering all aspects of society with AI, as it changes underlying systems, thereby incorporating all actors in such systems. That means the resulting change should be more comprehensive than could be achieved through a project-based approach.

AI governance structures

The three major bodies in Singaporean AI governance are the Ministry of Digital Development and Information, the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), and the Smart Nation initiative, of which the latter two operate under the ministry. The Ministry of Digital Development and Information is the successor to the Ministry of Communications and Information, renamed as such in 2024 to reflect the increasing importance of digitalisation. While the Ministry of Digital Development and information does some work with AI outside of the IMDA and the Smart Nation initiative, such as working with the National Library Board to introduce educational AI showcases across public libraries, most of its AI work is concentrated within those two initiatives.[60]

The IMDA developed the aforementioned AI Verify Testing Framework and AI Verify Toolkit and provides a plethora of other AI resources and services, including kits, red teams, conferences, private-sector governance frameworks,

60 Ministry of Digital Development and Information, 'AI Initiatives to Transform Life, Work and Business in Singapore', 7 March 2025.

self-assessment guides, and playbooks.[61] The IMDA also supports specific AI projects such as MERaLION, the large language model built for Singapore and South-East Asia.[62] The Smart Nation Initiative coordinates government activity on digital strategy, including developing Singapore's National AI Strategy. It also oversees Singapore's international AI strategy, which prioritises bilateral cooperation initiatives and technical cooperation as predecessors for broad-based multilateral cooperation, such as with the US–Singapore Critical and Emerging Technology Dialogue.[63]

61 Infocomm Media Development Authority, 'Artificial Intelligence in Singapore', 11 September 2025.

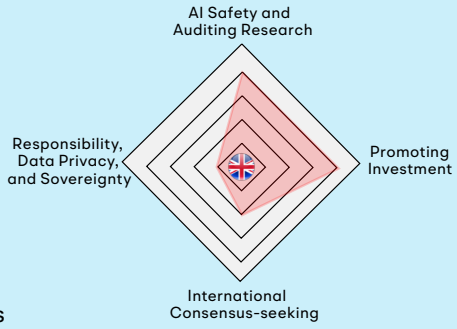
62 MERaLiON AI.

63 Smart Nation Singapore, *National AI Strategy*, 12 January 2026.

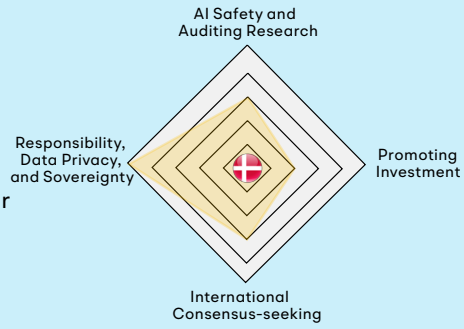
Summary: all AI strategies in a nutshell

For comparative purposes, this section presents brief summaries of each country's case study, including a spider-web diagram to present and compare findings visually along four main axes: AI safety and auditing research; responsibility, data privacy, and sovereignty; investment promotion; and international consensus-seeking. The scores are based on the prior analysis of each country's strategy, alongside other desk research and the authors' meetings with experts and national representatives throughout production of this report.'

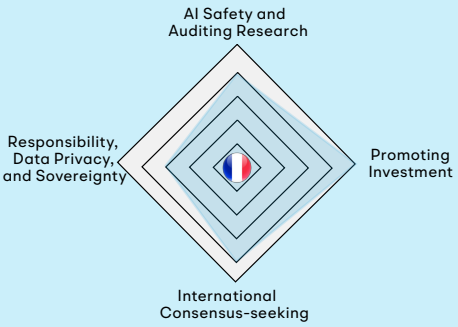
The UK has adopted a laissez-faire attitude towards AI, aligning with the US and focusing on attracting foreign investors, for instance through promoting widespread AI adoption and making deals with US Big Tech corporations. The UK has no AI-specific legislation, but it does have an 'AI Security Centre' focused on research around emerging AI risks and AI auditing.



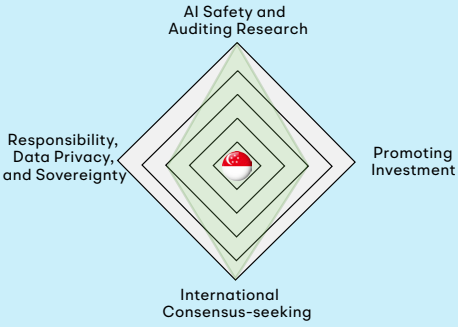
Denmark's approach consists of cultivating AI use across society in accordance with Danish laws and values, largely though an information-sharing approach. The Danish government places particular focus on AI in the public sector to deal with labour shortages and optimise government resources.



France's strategy somewhat resembles the underpinnings of the US's DARPA program. Rather than investing in many wholly new government initiatives, the French government focuses on funding a range of potentially good ideas without the need for expensive government projects. This has led to the emergence of competitive startups, research hubs, and a pronounced international presence.



Singapore places strong emphasis on safety, standards, and guidelines, and enables bottom-up development and testing of (open-source) models. Insofar as Singapore focuses on AI growth and competitiveness, it designates specific niches in which it can carve out and sustain an edge and focuses its efforts there.



Best practices for the Netherlands?

The four countries discussed – the UK, Denmark, France, and Singapore – have varying priorities and strategies around AI regulation, research, adoption, and development. Each country comes with its own strengths and weaknesses. The UK has strong research institutions and a dynamic investment ecosystem, but opens itself up to data privacy and sovereignty risks, while withdrawing from international consensus-seeking efforts. Denmark leads when it comes to ensuring that its AI development and public-sector adoption is responsibly in line with national priorities and sovereignty concerns, but has a limited international presence and private-sector strategy. France strikes an even balance between several key domains of AI strategy, but lacks centralised AI governance structures in favour of spreading mandates across existing institutions and initiatives. Singapore excels when it comes to targeted strategic investment, enabling the society-wide safe adoption of AI, and international consensus-seeking, but maintains a strong reliance on private-sector initiatives supported by government rather than wholly public initiatives.

Much like the Netherlands, Singapore is a small country with limited resources and has therefore chosen to invest in strategic sectors and niches. It is realistic about how best to use its limited resources to understand and regulate AI and allow for safe adoption that benefits its entire society. The Netherlands and Singapore also share an emphasis on ethical and safe AI adoption, to which end Singapore has contributed with its AI Verify Foundation and research on ethical, transparent, verifiable, and explainable AI. Its systems-based approach makes for a sensible strategy that promises to transform those sectors where Singapore expects the most benefit from AI adoption given its national context, which provides a compelling model for similar nations.

Many of the initiatives from the four countries presented here are relatively new and it is too early to evaluate them properly. As such, the Netherlands should first and foremost chart a path forward based on its own interests and priorities for AI development, rather than letting itself get carried away by the gargantuan generalised investments currently characterising the AI race.

To better position the Netherlands as a **regulator of AI adoption**, AI research and development should ideally focus on **AI risk prevention** in high-risk systems such as LLMs and dual-use AI models, tackling issues such as data bias, meaningful human control, and normative alignment. GPT-NL's work towards helping to understand LLMs is a welcome initiative in that regard.[64] Regarding **development** and **economic opportunities**, the Netherlands can **focus on deep tech and strategic niches**, where it hosts leading firms that own valuable data.[65] These niches are **most likely to yield profit and efficiency gains**. Focusing investments on Dutch niches helps to avoid the risk of spending large sums of public money that may never be earned back as fears of an 'AI bubble' mount. After all, while AI does have proven efficiency gains in certain areas, **it is not a silver bullet** that can instantly solve complex problems, especially in business or society. Government investments and programmes in AI should be carefully tailored for specific cases in which AI has established efficiency gains and must be balanced with the other mandates, responsibilities, ethical standards, and policy tools of public financing.

64 GPT-NL.

65 In this context, Deep Tech is a broad term which refers to technology solutions that address substantial scientific or engineering challenges that often take long term R&D and capital investment to develop. The resulting intellectual property is hard to reproduce and highly valuable.