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Austria

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Sean Musch, AI & Partners

Michael Borrelli, AI & Partners

Charles Kerrigan, CMS UK

Harald Friedl, Circular Economist

Jeannette Gorzala, AI Governance Expert

Josef Baker-Brunnbauer, SocialTechLab.eu

Andreas Hladky, pwc





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AI & Partners defends and extends the digital rights of users at risk around the world. By combining direct technical support, comprehensive policy engagement, global advocacy, grassroots professional services, regulatory interventions, and participating in industry groups such as AI Commons, we fight for fundamental rights in the artificial intelligence age.

This report was prepared by Sean Donald John Musch and Michael Charles Borrelli. For more information visit <https://www.ai-and-partners.com/>.

Contact: Michael Charles Borrelli | Director | m.borrelli@ai-and-partners.com.

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Who Are We

AI That You Can Trust

Why Us?

Stay on the right side of history. At AI & Partners, we believe AI should unlock potential—not cause harm. We've seen the fear and fallout when teams lose control of AI, but also the trust and innovation that follow when it's handled responsibly. That's why we exist: to help you build AI you can trust and stand behind—for the long run.

What Do We Do?

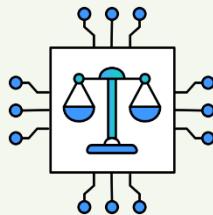
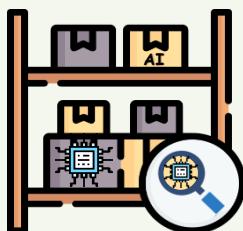
We enable safe AI usage—for your organization and your clients. Unknown AI adoption leads to confusion, risk, and reputational damage. We help you take control with tools to identify, monitor, and govern all AI systems—so you're not reacting to AI, you're leading it.

How Do We Do It?

Do you know what AI systems you have? Identify all known and unknown AI systems (algorithms, LLMs, prompts, and models) from all internal and external AI vendors, automated by generating your inventory. Overall, 80% of AI inventory is unknown to our clients.

How do you guarantee ongoing safe AI use? Continuously monitor deployed AI systems for performance drift, anomalies or failures, real-world impacts, and emerging risks (e.g. data poisoning). Any malfunction of an AI system has severe implications for organisations (e.g. inability to assess online misinformation that leads to widespread public mistrust), so monitoring becomes a matter of urgency.

80%
of AI systems
are unknown



AI Discovery & AI Inventory

Automatically detect all AI systems, including models, algorithms, and prompts, and maintain a live, always-updated register for full visibility and compliance.

Responsible AI

Embed fairness, transparency, and control into every stage of AI use—aligning with the EU AI Act and building 'Trustworthy-by-Design'.

Model Monitoring

Continuously track your AI models after deployment to detect drift, bias, or failure—so you stay in control and prevent harm before it happens.

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Overview

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is steadily transforming Austria's economy, public services, and research landscape. As a European Union Member State, Austria pursues an EU-aligned, ethics-driven approach to AI governance—anchored by the EU AI Act and articulated nationally through the Artificial Intelligence Mission Austria 2030 (AIM AT 2030). Rather than enacting standalone national AI legislation, Austria pursues an integrated approach, streamlining AI oversight within existing legal and institutional frameworks, strongly emphasizing strategic coherence, regulatory clarity, and impactful human-centric innovation.

Already in early 2024, Austria installed the AI Service Center at Rundfunk und Telekom Regulierungs-GmbH (RTR-GmbH) to guide the AI ecosystem until the EU AI Act legislative process was completed. The AI Service Center is designed as a single point of contact, know-how and exchange hub for AI regulatory matters to transcend the phase, until the national AI regulatory authority is established.

To foster safe and responsible AI innovation, Austria has launched one of in total 13 AI factories in the European Union, serving as a pan-European innovation booster. The AI Factory Austria (AI:AT) is Austria's landmark initiative with state-of-the-art supercomputing infrastructure. With an investment of EUR 80 million, 650 to 700 GPUs are planned. The AI Factory Austria utilizes synergies with lighthouse projects such as the planned AI center of the University of Vienna and the Vienna University of Technology, the biomedical AI institute AITHYRA and the FWF Cluster of Excellence Bilateral AI. Furthermore, also international players are investing in Austria. Microsoft additionally launched an AI factory, investing EUR 1bn in data centers and computing infrastructure, further driving AI development in Austria.

The Austrian AI public funding landscape provides various opportunities for pre-seed and seed financing as well as industry-related R&D, in particular via the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) and Austria Wirtschaftsservice (aws). Targeted funding calls ("AI for Green") support objectives and goals in line with Austria's strategic mission for safe, secure and sustainable AI development and deployment.

Austria's AI governance model is led by a distributed network of ministries and key institutions. Stakeholder engagement is institutionalized through platforms like the AI Advisory Board, academic advisory bodies, and regional partnerships. These structures ensure that ethical foresight, public accountability, and multi-sector coordination are integral to Austria's AI deployment. Internationally, Austria is an active contributor to European and global AI governance. It participates in shaping secondary EU AI legislation via the EU AI Board, aligns with international standards such as the OECD AI Principles and UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, and contributes to cross-border projects through Gaia-X Hub AT, Horizon Europe, and the Digital Decade initiatives.

As outlined in AIM AT 2030, Austria's vision for AI includes: Leveraging AI for public sector transformation; Empowering SMEs and startups through funding platforms, DIHs, and cloud-based experimentation environments; Advancing AI literacy and workforce readiness with inclusive educational reforms, lifelong learning, and digital skills for all; Promoting equitable access and regional cohesion via tailored digital inclusion programmes; Expanding high-performance computing, 5G, and secure cloud infrastructure, underpinned by GDPR compliance and ethical data governance.

Through this values-led, EU-integrated, and innovation-supportive model, Austria positions itself as a trusted partner in the European AI ecosystem. Its approach not only reflects best practices but contributes meaningfully to shaping a secure, ethical, and inclusive digital future.

This report outlines Austria's AI governance architecture, legal framework, and strategic initiatives—showcasing how a mid-sized European nation is advancing AI in a way that aligns technological ambition with societal responsibility and legal certainty.





Specific AI Governance or Law

Austria is implementing and evaluating a legal framework for AI that aligns with EU and international standards, focusing on safety, rights, and risk mitigation. The country supports regulatory sandboxes for real-world AI testing and emphasizes ethical considerations alongside technology impact assessments for responsible innovation.

Specific AI Governance in Austria

Rather than establishing standalone national AI legislation, Austria is concentrating on implementing the EU AI Act effectively at the national level. As an EU Member State, Austria is preparing its legal and institutional infrastructure to enforce the Act, shaping secondary EU legislation, and contributing to EU-level governance. The foundation of Austria's AI policy is the Artificial Intelligence Mission Austria 2030 (AIM AT 2030). This strategy, developed by multiple federal ministries in collaboration with research institutions and the private sector, sets the direction for AI development across seven future-oriented fields: research and innovation, industrial leadership, qualification and training, AI in the public sector, governance and law, economic application, and ethical/social considerations. AIM AT 2030 promotes Austria's vision of AI as a tool for public welfare and economic strength. To implement the EU AI Act, Austria is expected to take several key actions, including: Establishing a national supervisory authority for AI compliance and enforcement Participating in the EU AI Board to influence secondary legislation Supporting SMEs and startups through targeted resources and AI-specific funding. Developing regulatory sandboxes to foster innovation in a controlled environment, Creating national guidance for public sector AI adoption, Clarifying enforcement mechanisms for administrative sanctions under the EU AI Act.

In order to realize the opportunities of AI for Austria while simultaneously minimizing potential risks, the Austrian Federal Government's AI strategy, "Artificial Intelligence Mission Austria 2030 (AIM AT 2030)," was developed in 2021 in a participatory process with experts and other stakeholders. It pursues the following overarching goals:

- The aim is to achieve a broad, common-good-oriented use of AI, carried out responsibly and based on fundamental and human rights, European core values, and the upcoming European legal framework.
- Austria should position itself as a research and innovation center for artificial intelligence in key areas and areas of strength.
- The development and use of AI should secure the competitiveness of Austria as a technology and business location.

The federal government has launched a new digitalization initiative. The "Digital Austria Act 2.0" aims to create a strategic framework to adapt the administration to the changing circumstances of the times. The increased use of artificial intelligence has also become necessary to respond to demographically-driven gaps in the public service. The goal of the "Digital Austria Act 2.0" is to create a strategic framework for the coordinated further development of digital administration, to modernize existing instruments, to use new technologies responsibly, and to sustainably strengthen Austria's "digital sovereignty."



AI Ethics Guidelines and Sectoral Governance Tools

In line with the EU AI Act and a uniform European approach, the definition in Article 3(1) of the EU AI Act serves as the legal definition for artificial intelligence in Austria. Ethical issues—such as autonomy, accountability, data fairness, and societal impacts—are central themes in AIM AT 2030, which promotes a dialogue-oriented approach to AI governance. Austria's legal landscape includes several laws that already influence AI deployment, such as: The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), via national implementation, The Copyright Act, particularly for text and data mining, The E-Government Act, The Civil Code, in areas of liability, The Anti-Discrimination Act, Laws governing cybersecurity and national infrastructure resilience. These frameworks establish baseline rules for data governance, consumer protection, and security, even as Austria prepares for formal AI-specific obligations under the EU AI Act.

The Practical Guide for Digital Administration: AI, Ethics, and Law 2.0 is a further step toward making administration fit for the new digital age. In addition to the first version, the new guide addresses current technological developments such as generative artificial intelligence and quantum AI, as well as the regulatory requirements of the European AI Regulation, the AI Act. This guide remains a practical tool intended to provide guidance, but at the same time, it is a living instrument that will continue to be developed in the future to continue to accompany and accommodate rapid technological changes.

Proposed AI Regulatory Authority and Future Outlook

While a final decision is pending, Austria is expected to designate a national supervisory authority by 2 August 2025, in line with EU AI Act requirements. Likely candidates include regulatory bodies with expertise in digital governance, such as the Austrian Data Protection Authority and the RTR GmbH, which leads the AI Service Center. Austria views AI as both a productivity lever and a public-good enabler. As the country moves toward implementation of the EU AI Act, national policies will focus on ensuring legal clarity, fostering ethical AI adoption, and supporting both economic competitiveness and societal trust in emerging technologies.





Discussion: Austria's National AI Strategy

Austria's AI governance strategy is grounded in a values-driven, European-aligned framework that emphasizes societal resilience, SME empowerment, and ethical digital transformation. Operationalized through the Artificial Intelligence Mission Austria 2030 and embedded within the Digital Austria Act and Digital Decade Roadmap, Austria promotes human-centric, secure, and innovation-friendly AI through cross-sectoral engagement, public-private collaboration, and EU-level integration.

A broad use of AI oriented to the common good

Positioning Austria as an innovation location for AI in key areas and fields of strength

Securing the competitiveness of Austria's technology and business location with AI data

Analysis



Austria's AI strategy reflects a pragmatic, regulation-aware approach focused on digital sovereignty, inclusivity, and industrial modernization. While France emphasizes mission-led scaling and deep-tech leadership, Austria's roadmap prioritizes a digitally inclusive society, underpinned by secure infrastructure, skills development, and sustainability. The AI component of the National Digital Decade Strategy is closely tied to Austria's participation in European initiatives like the Chips Act, Gaia-X, and the EU AI Act implementation. The Artificial Intelligence Mission Austria (AIM AT) strategy and associated funding initiatives support responsible AI innovation, especially for SMEs and public services.

While Austria's AI deployment rates (9% for companies) remain below EU averages, the national roadmap outlines coordinated actions to close this gap—via AI marketplaces, cloud infrastructure (Ö-Cloud, Gaia-X Hub AT), and legal-advisory centres for AI application deployment. The focus on "AI for Green," secure experimentation spaces, and regulatory alignment reflects Austria's dual goal: supporting ethical AI integration while enhancing national competitiveness in key industrial and digital domains.

Austria's strategy leverages national and European instruments to foster AI adoption in sectors like mobility, health, administration, and energy. With tools such as Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs), the country facilitates SME access to AI tools and research capabilities. Public service platforms like FinanzOnline, MeineSV, and oesterreich.gv.at serve as AI testbeds for efficiency and trust-building.

In parallel, Austria's semiconductor policy—anchored in the EU Chips Act and backed by €3 billion in investment—supports AI-enabling hardware ecosystems. Strategic sectoral alignment also includes quantum computing (Quantum Austria), digital health (ELGA), and Industry 4.0 initiatives across the automotive and manufacturing sectors.



Austria employs a multi-level, distributed model of AI governance, coordinated through the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs, and the Ministry of Education, among others. The Digital Austria Act consolidates 117 digitalization measures across ministries, ensuring cross-cutting policy coherence and stakeholder inclusion. Stakeholder engagement is institutionalized via consultations with industry, universities, social partners, and regional authorities. Structures like the Start-up Council, National Competence Centres, and education-focused advisory platforms ensure that AI policy integrates diverse perspectives and regional contexts.

Austria embeds risk sensitivity into its AI strategy through ethical frameworks, GDPR-based data governance, and national sandboxes for experimentation. Measures such as the AI Service Centre and the “AI for Green” initiative foster the development of trustworthy AI that respects privacy, equity, and environmental thresholds. Austria contributes to global AI governance by actively participating in EU, OECD, and Horizon Europe initiatives. Its Gaia-X Hub AT and engagement in cross-border projects ensure that national digital systems are interoperable, secure, and aligned with EU data spaces and ethical AI standards.

Austrian policy strongly emphasizes education, aiming for 100% digital literacy by 2030. Key programmes include Digital Skills for All, MOOCs for educators, and the “Digital Everywhere” initiative that brings AI literacy to underserved communities. Higher education reforms and institutions like the Institute of Digital Sciences Austria aim to produce AI-proficient professionals with a broad, interdisciplinary outlook. Austria also promotes startup and SME innovation through platforms like KMU.DIGITAL, aws funding schemes, and incubator networks such as GIN (Global Incubator Network). Targeted support for women in STEM, talent recruitment, and lifelong learning initiatives addresses demographic gaps in the AI workforce.

Austria’s AI roadmap is designed for continuity, scalability, and European integration. Its digital infrastructure goals—100% 5G and gigabit coverage by 2030—provide the foundation for pervasive, scalable AI systems. The national eID system (ID Austria), ELGA, and digital public services are already among Europe’s most advanced. With performance tracking via DESI metrics and alignment with the EU Digital Compass, Austria’s AI governance framework aspires to blend ethical oversight, strategic investment, and regulatory agility—preparing the country to meet the digital and environmental challenges of the next decade.





Austria's Approach to AI Regulation and Governance

In 2021, the Austrian Federal Government published its national strategy for artificial intelligence (AI) under the title Artificial Intelligence Mission Austria 2030 (AIM AT 2030). It defined three strategic goals for AI development in Austria: The use of AI should serve the common good; Austria should position itself as a research location in the field of AI; and the use of AI should ensure Austria's competitiveness. To achieve these goals, 13 fields of action were defined, which in turn form two cornerstones: "Trustworthy AI" and "AI Ecosystem."

In an annex to AIM AT 2030, 11 specific fields of application for AI were also identified. A total of 91 measures were defined for these fields of action and application. The Austrian AI strategy is defined as an agile strategy. This means it is open to further refinements and additions. In this sense, the existing implementation plan should be understood not only as an initial interim report, but also as a substantive supplement to AIM AT 2030. The implementation plan provides an overview of 47 measures from all twelve federal ministries that are already being implemented or currently being planned as part of the AI strategy for the period from 2024 onwards. Details on the implementation of these measures, as well as further plans by the individual ministries that have not yet been included in this report, can be found on the website www.ki-strategie.at.



Institutional Support and Strategic Missions

The development and implementation of AI policy in Austria is led by multiple ministries, primarily the Federal Ministries for Transport, Innovation and Technology, and for Digital and Economic Affairs. These are supported by dedicated research institutions and funding bodies, such as the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) and the Christian Doppler Research Association. Strategic missions are concentrated on areas where AI can serve the public good—such as mobility, healthcare, production, and education. Public sector adoption of AI is seen as a driving force for broader economic diffusion, enabling Austria to become both an early adopter and innovator.

The AI:AT – AI Factory Austria – is a national initiative to sustainably strengthen the Austrian AI ecosystem. Through state-of-the-art supercomputing infrastructure, targeted support offerings, and a strong partner network, we are laying the foundation for powerful, secure, and economically viable AI applications. Funded by the European High Performance Computing (EuroHPC) Joint Undertaking, AI:AT is making a key contribution to European competitiveness and innovation in the field of artificial intelligence.



For questions around AI topics a new service the AI Service Center has been established at the national Broadcasting and Telecoms Regulation company (RTR). The legal basis for the AI Service Center is Section 20c of the Act on the Protection of Artificial Intelligence (KOG) and Section 194a of the Telecommunications Act (TKG) (Federal Law Gazette I No. 6/2024).

The Service Center for Artificial Intelligence, established within the RTR, serves as a contact point and information hub for the general public on the topic of AI. It also supports the implementation of the European AI Act. On these pages, you will find information on the regulatory framework for the use of artificial intelligence, as well as aspects related to cybersecurity, data economics, and its use in the media sector.

Standards Development and Global Engagement

Austria actively contributes to European and international standard-setting processes, emphasizing cross-border collaboration to ensure coherent frameworks for AI deployment. AIM AT 2030 explicitly supports harmonization with EU regulation and the shaping of global AI governance through participation in initiatives like the European Digital Single Market and partnerships in AI research.

Sectoral and Extended Regulatory Approaches

Austria promotes a balanced model of sectoral subsidiarity and central legal clarity. The emphasis is on minimizing regulatory fragmentation by addressing data governance, ethical use, and safety through comprehensive, cross-sectoral principles. This includes clear guidelines for AI use in cloud environments, autonomous driving, and health applications, avoiding national isolation and encouraging European alignment.



Fostering Innovation and Indigenous Development

AIM AT 2030 highlights Austria's longstanding tradition in AI research, focusing on areas such as robotics, natural language processing, and industry 4.0. The strategy supports domestic innovation through funding programmes like COMET, BRIDGE, and COIN, as well as through test environments and public-private partnerships.

Austria seeks to empower SMEs and startups through access to digital infrastructure, targeted grants, and sandbox experimentation zones, especially in areas with high potential for service innovation.

AI in Public Sector Transformation

Austria positions AI as a means to modernize public administration—from financial systems to security and citizen services. The public sector is encouraged to serve as a lead user, creating digital services and promoting AI's responsible uptake through e-government initiatives. Applications include fraud detection, passport control, and automated decision support in administration.



AI Skills, Education and Inclusion

Recognizing that digital competence is foundational, AIM AT 2030 calls for AI education at all levels—from schools to vocational training and universities. The strategy supports lifelong learning and reskilling, ensuring that both professionals and citizens can confidently engage with AI technologies.

Particular focus is placed on integrating AI in education delivery itself, such as through intelligent tutoring systems, and preparing the education system for profound curricular changes induced by AI.

Infrastructure, Compute and Data Foundations

Austria acknowledges the centrality of digital infrastructure for AI deployment. AIM AT 2030 promotes investment in broadband, 5G, and high-performance computing, as well as interoperable systems in sectors like transport and health. Emphasis is placed on secure data environments and cloud-based services that support scalable and responsible AI innovation.





Austria's Approach to Fostering AI Innovation

'Austria's approach to artificial intelligence is grounded in digital sovereignty, scientific leadership, and alignment with EU strategies. Through the National AI Strategy and its AIM AT funding initiative, Austria seeks to position itself as a key European innovator in trustworthy AI, green tech, and public sector digitisation. Austria's policy combines institutional coordination, industry-academic ecosystems, and citizen-centred values to unlock AI's potential while reinforcing democratic norms and inclusive growth.'

The 2024 Implementation Plan pursues four horizontal priorities that define fundamental requirements for the quality of AI applications and serve as guiding principles throughout the implementation measures. They are aligned with the objectives of the AI strategy AIM AT 2030 and are further specified in this implementation plan. Each measure in the implementation plan addresses at least one of the four horizontal priorities; many measures address several horizontal priorities simultaneously. Furthermore, all measures in the implementation plan are categorized into four vertical priorities. These are of high strategic relevance and address specific application domains or target groups.



1. Unlocking Economic Value through Targeted AI Deployment

Austria targets AI adoption to strengthen strategic sectors such as healthcare, mobility, industry, and climate innovation. The government promotes initiatives like the AI Marketplace and AI for Green, which focus on digital sustainability and sector-specific transformation. These efforts include pilot deployments and integrated AI solutions aimed at boosting productivity, streamlining service delivery, and enhancing resilience across the economy.

2. Catalysing Innovation through Strategic Clustering and Ecosystems

AI ecosystems in Austria are anchored by Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs), research centres, and public-private partnerships. Vienna, Linz, and Graz serve as key innovation zones where academia and industry collaborate under initiatives like the Gaia-X Hub Austria and the AIM AT programme. National and EU-level networks support Austria's integration into broader European AI ecosystems.



3. Enabling Trusted and Responsible Data Use

Austria promotes GDPR-aligned frameworks and AI regulatory sandboxes to ensure safe, legal, and ethical data use. Initiatives like the Ö-Cloud and Gaia-X Hub AT strengthen secure cloud infrastructure and support data-driven experimentation for SMEs and researchers. Ethical AI development is further reinforced through government-funded legal guidance and interdisciplinary research on algorithmic fairness.

4. Scaling AI in the Public Sector

Austria is digitising public administration through AI-driven platforms such as FinanzOnline, ELGA, and the “Digitales Amt” app. AI applications support fraud detection, mobility optimisation, and smart document processing. A 78% online service provision rate (DESI 2023) reflects Austria’s digital maturity, while ongoing investments aim to achieve 100% digital service coverage by 2030.

5. Advancing Compute and Research Infrastructure

Austria is expanding high-performance computing through projects like Quantum Austria and participation in the Chips Act initiatives. National funding, including a €3 billion investment in microelectronics by 2031, supports foundational R&D and strengthens the AI research landscape. Universities and research institutes play a critical role in advancing quantum, edge, and AI-enabled systems. The AI Factory Austria (AI:AT) is Austria's landmark initiative with state-of-the-art supercomputing infrastructure. With an investment of EUR 80 million, 650 to 700 GPUs are planned.

6. Empowering SMEs and Startups

Through programmes like KMU.DIGITAL and aws Start-up Fund II, Austria empowers SMEs and startups with access to finance, digital tools, and AI testbeds. European and national DIHs assist firms in implementing AI, big data, and cloud computing, addressing Austria’s below-average SME digital intensity and accelerating technology diffusion in underserved sectors.

7. Developing a Future-Ready Workforce

Austria’s “Digital Skills Austria” strategy addresses the national shortage of ICT specialists, particularly women, and aims for 100% basic digital skills by 2030. Educational reforms—from primary school to university-level AI literacy—focus on computational thinking and digital inclusion. Lifelong learning, MOOCs, and targeted training initiatives support workforce adaptability across age and professional groups.

8. Aligning AI Innovation with Sustainability Goals

The AI for Green programme and broader Digital Action Plan Austria connect AI development to climate and circular economy goals. Green tech applications, energy-efficient computing, and environmental monitoring are integral to Austria’s twin transition strategy. National funding instruments incentivise low-carbon innovation and climate-resilient AI solutions.

9. Building Public Trust and Ethical AI

Austria prioritises citizen trust through initiatives such as digi.check, ethical oversight frameworks, and participatory policy processes. The government supports interdisciplinary research and legal assessment tools for AI risk, fairness, and transparency. The Institute of Digital Sciences Austria contributes to embedding ethics and social considerations into technological innovation.





10. Shaping Global AI Governance and Standards

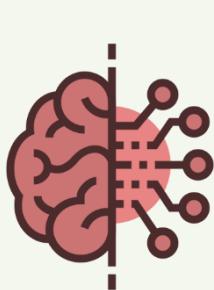
Austria actively contributes to shaping global AI policy through its participation in EU, OECD, and multi-country initiatives. By aligning with EU AI Act frameworks and fostering interoperability through Gaia-X and other data governance efforts, Austria positions itself as a collaborative and principled actor in international AI standardisation.

Figure 1: Fields of Application





Figure 2: Fields of Action



Trustworthy AI

Define ethical principles

Create legal framework

AI and work

Create AI standards

Security of AI systems

Social dialogue

Create Ecosystem

Making data usable

Creating and using knowledge

AI Infrastructure

Qualification, education, and training

Strengthening the competitiveness of the economy

Provide financing

Modernise public administration with AI





Digital Decade 2025: Country Report

'Austria's revised national AI roadmap now sets out a specific target and a clear trajectory for the adoption of artificial intelligence, fully in line with the objectives of the EU's Digital Decade. Given the country's strong policy backing and current momentum in AI development, these national goals appear both feasible and well-supported. Austria is progressing as planned along its designated pathway'

The updated roadmap also introduces significant structural and organisational enhancements aimed at boosting AI adoption. Notably, initiatives to advance digital technologies in artificial intelligence and data-driven innovation have been allocated a combined budget of approximately EUR 170 million for the 2023–2026 period. This funding includes dedicated support of EUR 3.8 million for the "AI for Green" initiative and EUR 4.8 million for "AI for Tech," highlighting Austria's strategic focus on applying AI to promote environmental sustainability and technological advancement.

Launched in 2021, the AI for Green initiative is specifically designed to leverage AI technologies in achieving climate and environmental goals. So far, it has backed 40 projects with an overall investment of around EUR 22.5 million, and a fourth round of funding calls was successfully completed in 2024.

As part of the roadmap, the COMET programme is positioned as a key driver of Austria's AI capacity. With a projected budget of EUR 157 million for 2024–2026, the programme supports long-term research partnerships between industry and academia, stimulating innovation in sectors such as healthcare, mobility, industrial production, and life sciences. Within this funding, roughly EUR 25 million is expected to be channelled into AI and other advanced digital technologies.

Beyond financial support, Austria continues to cultivate a dynamic AI ecosystem. The AI Marketplace, supported by the Austrian promotional bank aws, serves as a platform connecting technology providers with businesses, fostering innovation and digital transformation. Furthermore, initiatives like Digital Humanism underscore the country's commitment to ethically responsible AI, reflecting values that are consistent with European principles. Austria's engagement in EU-wide initiatives adds further strength to its national AI strategy. For example, its recent designation by the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking to host an AI Factory enhances the country's infrastructure and expertise, particularly benefiting small and medium-sized enterprises aiming to scale AI solutions.

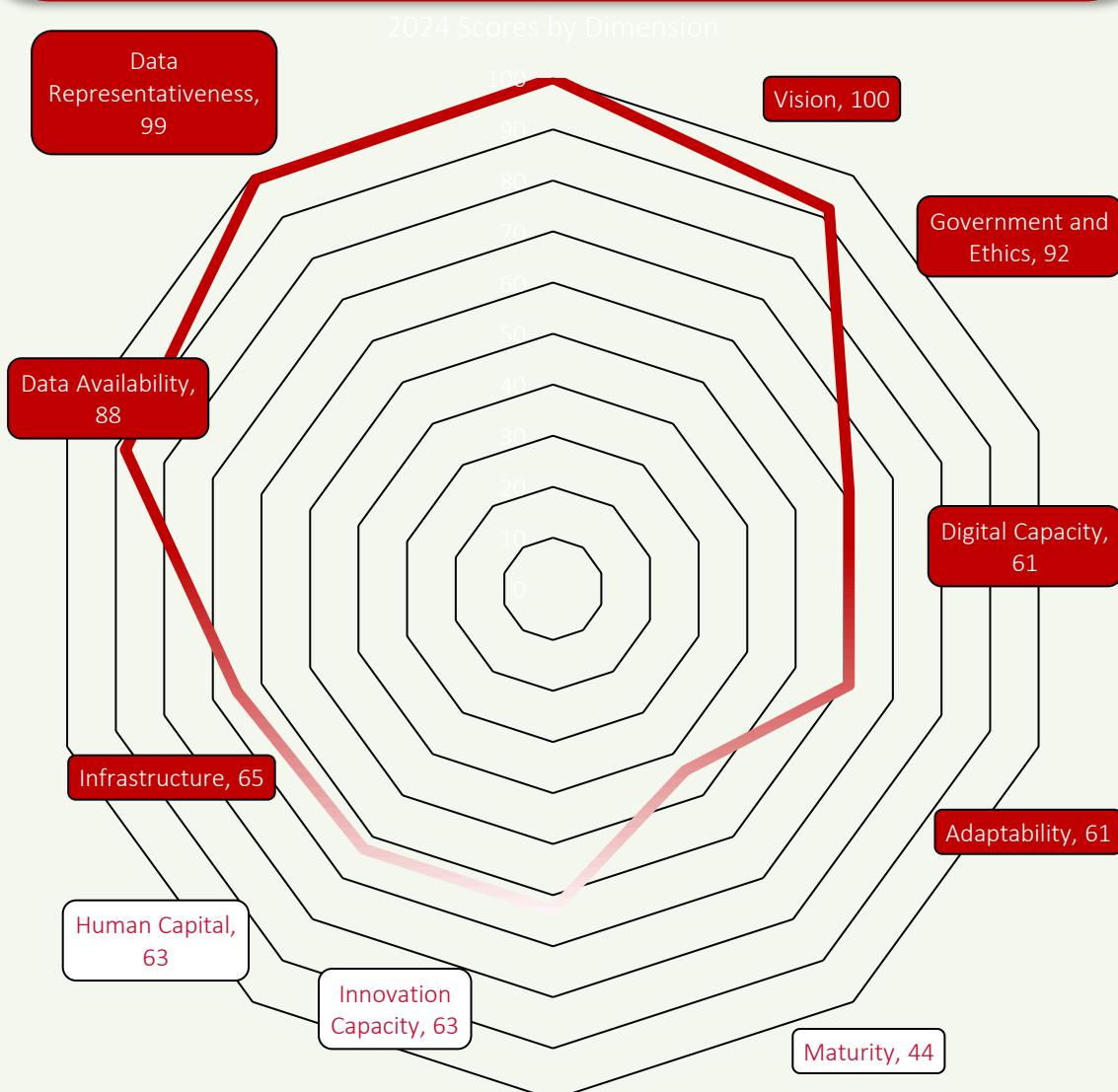




Government AI Readiness

by Oxford Insights

Western Europe ranks as the highest-performing region in this year's Government AI Readiness Index, with five countries in the global top 10. France leads the regional ranking with a score of 79.36, narrowly ahead of the United Kingdom (78.88), followed closely by the Netherlands (77.23), Germany (76.90), and Finland (76.48). With an average regional score of 69.56, Western Europe outperforms the global average (47.59) across all three pillars of Government, Technology, and Data & Infrastructure. The region's standout strength is the Data & Infrastructure pillar, where it averages 81.91, more than 21 points above the global benchmark (59.62), reflecting its advanced digital infrastructure and high-quality data environment. Although a few microstates such as San Marino, Liechtenstein, and Andorra fall slightly below the global average in the Government pillar, Western Europe's dominance at the top of the index underscores its continued leadership in AI readiness.





Government

Austria scores 78.37 in the Government pillar, reflecting a well-established, participatory, and ethics-centered approach to AI policymaking. While Austria does not have a dedicated AI law, its regulatory environment aligns closely with the EU AI Act, emphasizing safety, transparency, and proportionality in AI deployment. The Artificial Intelligence Mission Austria 2030 (AIM AT 2030) forms the cornerstone of national strategy, promoting a human-centric vision grounded in legal clarity and cross-sectoral coherence. Institutional support is coordinated by key ministries, including Digital and Economic Affairs, and Transport, Innovation and Technology, with advisory input from research institutes and innovation agencies. The strategy's emphasis on inclusive societal dialogue and trust-building mechanisms positions Austria as a strong contributor to the EU's vision of trustworthy AI.

Technology Sector

Austria scores 56.56 in the Technology pillar, underscoring a capable but still maturing innovation landscape. The country boasts a robust tradition in academic AI research, particularly in fields like robotics, neural networks, and natural language processing. Strategic funding mechanisms—such as COMET, BRIDGE, and COIN—support technology transfer and industrial experimentation. However, the startup ecosystem faces scaling barriers, with limited venture capital density and moderate private-sector AI adoption. Government-backed programmes aim to bridge these gaps through testbeds, public-sector deployments, and support for university–industry collaborations. Continued investment in talent development, commercialization capacity, and embedded AI R&D will be key to strengthening Austria's deep-tech competitiveness.

Data & Infrastructure

Austria achieves a strong score of 83.57 in the Data & Infrastructure pillar, reflecting significant progress in digital connectivity, data readiness, and cloud integration. National investments in broadband, 5G, and interoperable sectoral systems—especially in health, energy, and mobility—create a solid foundation for AI scale-up. The country supports open data access, privacy-respecting innovation, and secure AI experimentation environments. Data governance is guided by EU frameworks and enhanced by national institutions promoting ethical data usage. Austria's efforts to establish high-performance computing and accessible AI test environments for SMEs underscore its commitment to enabling innovation while safeguarding citizen rights..





Conclusion

Austria's artificial intelligence ecosystem is at an inflection point—poised to translate its EU-aligned strategy, robust legal foundations, and multi-level institutional coordination into widespread economic and societal impact. Anchored by the Artificial Intelligence Mission Austria 2030 (AIM AT 2030) and integrated with the Digital Austria Act and Digital Decade Roadmap, Austria has established a stable, ethical, and innovation-friendly environment for AI deployment.

Flagship initiatives such as the creation of AI regulatory sandboxes, expansion of Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs), and sector-specific applications in health (e.g., ELGA), energy, and public administration (e.g., FinanzOnline, oesterreich.gv.at) reflect Austria's strategic commitment to embedding AI in both government and industry. The anticipated national implementation of the EU AI Act—supported by the competent Austrian ministries —reinforces Austria's standing as a risk-aware, principle-driven AI jurisdiction in Europe.

Yet, as highlighted by AI readiness assessments and digital performance indicators, key barriers remain in scaling innovation, commercializing research, and supporting deep-tech entrepreneurship. Austria's academic research in fields like robotics and natural language processing is internationally competitive, but translating this strength into market-ready solutions is constrained by limited venture capital, moderate startup growth, and fragmented support for commercialization.

To advance along the AI maturity curve, Austria must boost investment in high-performance computing and data infrastructure, strengthen university–industry collaboration, and simplify access to legal and financial guidance for emerging AI ventures. Programs like “AI for Green” and aws Start-up Fund II show promise, but broader systemic alignment is needed to scale SME participation, accelerate digital adoption, and embed AI across critical industrial sectors.

Institutional coherence is one of Austria's strongest assets. National AI policy is coordinated through multiple ministries. This distributed model enables integration across policy domains, but to effectively address complex governance challenges—such as algorithmic fairness, data stewardship, and frontier AI risks—Austria must expand interdisciplinary expertise and regulatory flexibility across the ecosystem.

Internationally, Austria actively contributes to shaping AI governance within the EU AI Board and other standard-setting bodies such as OECD and UNESCO. Through initiatives like Gaia-X Hub AT, Horizon Europe participation, and the Digital Compass, Austria is helping define the future of ethical AI and cross-border data cooperation. While Austria channels its influence through EU frameworks, its contributions to AI ethics, climate-aligned digital transformation, and trustworthy AI development are substantive and growing.

The opportunity is clear: Austria has a coherent national strategy, advanced digital infrastructure, and a well-organized governance model. With renewed focus on private-sector innovation, workforce AI literacy, and international-standard experimentation environments, Austria can evolve from a policy-aligned actor to a continental leader in ethical and inclusive AI. The groundwork is laid—the next step is ecosystem-wide acceleration.



Appendix: Expert Views



Harald Friedl

Circular Economist



“

“AI is shaping our common future - now. There is no way we can wait to shape this - all together. Austria’s AI future must be built on the foundation of Trustworthy AI—anchored in clear ethical principles, a robust legal framework, and inclusive governance that adapts and learns, ensuring technology truly serves society and the common good.”

”

Biography

Harald Friedl is an internationally renowned circular economist. He is advising the United Nations in several countries and is working with top companies on their road towards circularity. He regularly writes about AI & Sustainability.



Josef Baker-Brunnbauer

*Founder & Chief AI Ethicist at
SocialTechLab.eu*



Biography

SocialTechLab.eu has been founded by Josef Baker-Brunnbauer during research work at the University of Graz, Austria in 2019. The findings showed the need for Trustworthy AI for a societal understanding and acceptance. It also demonstrated the challenges for companies to tackle the implementation of Trustworthy AI Systems. The TAII Framework® for AI companies combines methodologies from interdisciplinary professions like computer science, innovation, business management, psychology, and sociology. More information: www.socialtechlab.eu





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