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DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

AI Made in Africa

Context

Artificial Intelligence (AI) holds immense potential to drive economic, social, and environmental progress in Africa by addressing key developmental challenges. However, the African AI ecosystem faces significant hurdles:

- Data Colonialism:** Global tech giants often dominate AI development in Africa, extracting data while generating value, jobs, and tax revenues outside the continent.
- Policy Gaps:** African private sector voices, particularly startups and open data advocates, are underrepresented in AI policymaking, leading to restrictive laws like data localisation that hinder innovation.
- Data Access:** Limited access to critical AI data sources restricts the growth of African AI startups and innovation ecosystems.
- Policy Misalignment:** African priorities for AI-driven economic growth are often overlooked in global development agendas, reducing the impact of AI initiatives.

Project Name	AI Made in Africa
Commissioned/Implemented by	GIZ self-initiated measure
Project region	Africa
Project budget	1 million €
Duration	04.2025 – 03.2027



Photo: Bavarian AI Startups Visit to AI Made in Africa

Implemented by

giz

Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

\$16.5 Billion

The projected value of Africa's AI market by 2030, reflecting a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of over 27% from 2025



Mastercard (2025)

230 Million

The estimated number of new digital-sector jobs that AI and digitalization are expected to create in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030



SAP/Mastercard (2025)



~2,400

The estimated number of AI-focused companies and organizations currently operating across the African continent

1%

Africa's contribution to the global AI talent pool, highlighting a severe skills shortage that delays projects



WEP/Industry Reports (2025)

<50%

The maximum Government AI Readiness Index score achieved by only a handful of African nations (e.g., Egypt, South Africa), underscoring the continental policy gap



Oxford insights (2024)



Photo: AI Made in Africa hosting a session at IGF 2025, Norway

Our Approach

The "AI Made in Africa" initiative, funded by GIZ management board from **March 2025 to March 2027**, aims to strengthen the enabling environment for AI-driven economic development across the continent. The approach is built on African expertise, continental policy frameworks, and strong multi-stakeholder collaboration through four key objectives:

1. Evidence-Based policy and research

Partnering with African think tanks and policy institutions, the project will co-create evidence-based policy papers with recommendations on key topics, aligned with African Union (AU) frameworks. The outputs will serve as valuable inputs for both continental and global policy dialogues.

2. Amplifying African Private Sector Voices

Strengthening the participation of AI startups, SMEs and innovators in policymaking processes through consultations, surveys and regional dialogues. By capturing their perspectives, the project aims to ensure that future AI policy frameworks are practical, growth-oriented, and responsive to the challenges faced by the private sector. Strengthening this feedback loop will help transform Africa's AI ecosystem into one that is inclusive, competitive, and investment friendly.

3. Strengthening Open Data Ecosystem

Data is the foundation of AI innovation, yet access remains fragmented and inequitable across the continent. To address this, the project will pilot three approaches to enhance the accessibility of AI-relevant datasets within Africa's innovation ecosystem.

4. Policy Dialogue and Outreach

Integrate project findings, good practices and policy recommendations into continental and global AI policy

dialogues, conferences, and publications to strengthen Africa's position in the global AI discourse. We will also facilitate exchanges between African and European AI communities.

Key Activities

The following key activities outline how our approaches will be put into practice across policy research, private sector engagement, data ecosystems, and policy dialogue aligned with AU frameworks.

1. Develop and publish AI policy papers aligned with AU priorities
2. Conduct a continental survey of AI startups and businesses to assess their needs and amplify their voices in AU policy dialogues
3. Support open data collaborations that enhance accessibility for AI innovations
4. Contribute to AU-level policy dialogues and international platforms
5. Facilitate exchanges between African and European AI communities

Key Partners

Implementation will be pursued in close collaboration with:

1. African Union Commission (AUC) departments related to digital economy and innovation
2. Leading African research and policy institutions (e.g., specific universities, policy think tanks)
3. Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
4. Selected private sector advocacy groups (e.g., startup associations)

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Text

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