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Executive Briefing:

# *AI Readiness for Sovereign Nations*

A leadership briefing for Tribal Council and senior staff — no technical background required. Five readiness domains, a priority action matrix, and sovereign guiding principles.

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Pair this briefing with the free AI Readiness Assessment at [ai-assessment.tribal-technology.com](https://ai-assessment.tribal-technology.com)

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KEY FINDING

## *Policy before procurement.*

Tribal nations that establish data sovereignty policies, vendor evaluation criteria, and internal governance structures *before* adopting AI systems retain far greater control over outcomes. This briefing helps leadership build that foundation.

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READINESS ASSESSMENT

# Five Sovereign Dimensions

Complete the interactive assessment at [ai-assessment.tribal-technology.com](https://ai-assessment.tribal-technology.com) to score your nation across each domain. Use the table below to record your results.

Domain	Description	Your Score
■ Data Governance	Written policies, data inventory, breach processes, member transparency	____ / 100
■ Sovereignty	Jurisdictional language, cultural data protections, FPIC processes	____ / 100
■■ Vendor Risk	Procurement checklist, terms review, data portability, Indigenous data vetting	____ / 100
■ Community Impact	Community consultation, decision boundaries, feedback channels	____ / 100
■ Workforce	Internal AI lead, staff training, leadership literacy, capacity plan	____ / 100
Overall Readiness		____ / 100

0 – 39%	40 – 69%	70 – 100%
<i>Emerging</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>AI Ready</i>
Foundation-building phase. Prioritize data governance and sovereignty policies before any AI adoption.	Good progress. Target your two lowest-scoring domains. Pilot low-risk AI with strong oversight.	Strong foundation. Ready to evaluate and adopt AI tools with appropriate governance structures in place.

## PRIORITY ACTIONS

# Where to Start

Priority	Action Item	Domain
CRITICAL	Establish a written Tribal Data Sovereignty Policy grounded in CARE Principles	Data Governance
CRITICAL	Audit and classify all tribal data assets — know what you have and where it lives	Data Governance
CRITICAL	Review all vendor contracts for data ownership, portability, and termination rights	Vendor Risk

<b>HIGH</b>	Develop a Tribal AI Procurement Checklist for evaluating new vendor proposals	<i>Vendor Risk</i>
<b>HIGH</b>	Designate an internal AI/Data lead responsible for governance oversight	<i>Workforce</i>
<b>HIGH</b>	Establish explicit contractual prohibitions on use of tribal cultural data for AI training	<i>Sovereignty</i>
<b>MEDIUM</b>	Design a community consultation process for technology decisions affecting community	<i>Community Impact</i>
<b>MEDIUM</b>	Conduct all-staff AI literacy training (minimum 2 hours) for tribal employees	<i>Workforce</i>

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## Six Commitments for Sovereign AI Adoption

<b>I. Sovereignty First</b>	Jurisdictional authority over technology systems and data is non-negotiable. No AI system should be adopted that compromises tribal sovereign authority.
<b>II. Community Over Efficiency</b>	AI tools that improve operational efficiency but harm community trust or cultural integrity are not improvements. Community benefit is the primary metric.
<b>III. Cultural Data Is Sacred</b>	Language, oral history, and ceremonial knowledge are not data assets to be optimized. Explicit contractual prohibitions on using cultural data for AI training are required.
<b>IV. Build Internal Capacity</b>	Every AI adoption should include a plan to reduce vendor dependency over time. The goal is tribal expertise, not perpetual vendor reliance.
<b>V. Consent Is Ongoing</b>	Community consent for AI deployments is not a one-time approval. Establish mechanisms to revisit, pause, or halt deployments as conditions change.
<b>VI. Start Slow, Learn Fast</b>	Begin with low-risk administrative use cases and build governance experience before deploying AI in sensitive domains like health, enrollment, or child welfare.

#### NEXT STEPS

Take the free AI Readiness Assessment at [ai-assessment.tribal-technology.com](https://ai-assessment.tribal-technology.com) to score your nation across all five domains and generate a prioritized action plan.

Download the companion RFP Addendum at [tribal-technology.com/resources](https://tribal-technology.com/resources) to protect your nation in any AI or technology procurement — free to use and adapt.

*Questions or want to discuss your nation's readiness? Contact us: [info@tribal-technology.com](mailto:info@tribal-technology.com)*