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PORTUGAL'S NATIONAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AGENDA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Portuguese Government has approved the National Artificial Intelligence "AI" Agenda[1] (*Agenda Nacional de Inteligência Artificial*, "National AI Agenda"), together with its governance model and the corresponding Action Plan for the period 2026–2030 (*Plano de Ação da Agenda Nacional de Inteligência Artificial*).

The National AI Agenda projects that AI will generate GDP gains of €18–22 billion over the decade and an annual productivity increase of up to 2.7 percentage points, addressing Portugal's structural gaps relative to EU averages. Portugal's National AI Agenda aims to foster the development of an AI infrastructure, via the construction of data centres and supercomputing capacity, promotion of AI adoption, regulatory sandboxes, and talent development programmes. These measures promote innovation through R&D incentives, ethical AI deployment, and intellectual property regime reviews, while phased implementation from 2025–2030 ensures scalable benefits.

[1] Council of Ministers Resolution 2/2026 of 8 January 2026.

BACKGROUND

Portugal has recognised the potential of AI for several years, most notably with the adoption of the AI Portugal 2030 Strategy in 2019. Since then, the rapid rise of generative AI, combined with the EU AI Act, has highlighted the need for a clearer and more comprehensive national approach to AI.

The National AI Agenda builds on a broad preparatory process, including public consultations, expert hearings, academic and industry engagement, and structured contributions from the entire Public Administration.

The agenda is grounded in Portugal's structural advantages, including a strong network of universities and research centres, a dynamic startup ecosystem, access to competitively priced and largely renewable energy, advanced digital connectivity and international submarine cable infrastructure, and an increasing ability to attract international investment and highly qualified talent. These factors have made Portugal increasingly attractive for AI-enabling infrastructure, particularly hyperscale and high-performance data centres.

According to the projections cited in the resolution, widespread adoption of AI could add €18-22 billion to Portugal's GDP over the next decade and increase annual productivity growth by up to 2.7 percentage points, addressing a long-standing structural productivity gap relative to the European average.

KEY CONTENT

The National AI Agenda is structured around four main pillars: infrastructure, innovation, skills and ethics.

- The ***infrastructure and data pillar*** focuses on ensuring the availability of sufficient computing power and high-quality data resources. Key measures include the expansion of national supercomputing capacity, the implementation of a National Data Centres Plan with simplified licensing procedures, and the creation of shared data spaces for priority sectors such as health, industry, education, and public administration.
- The ***innovation and adoption pillar*** aims to translate AI into a practical driver of economic activity. It provides for funding of research and applied projects, the creation of sectoral AI centres, support for corporate AI research and development, and incentives to encourage the adoption of AI solutions by companies and public bodies.

- The ***talent and skills pillar*** addresses the shortage of specialised professionals through training programmes, the expansion of advanced education and industry-linked doctoral paths, and measures designed to attract and retain international AI talent.
- The ***responsibility and ethics pillar*** ensures that AI is developed and deployed in a safe, lawful, and trustworthy manner. It includes the national implementation of the EU AI Act, the use of regulatory sandboxes for controlled testing, and the provision of guidance and tools to support risk management and compliance.

ACTION PLAN

The National AI Agenda gives practical effect to the agenda through 32 initiatives involving public authorities, universities, research centres, and private companies.

These initiatives include the reinforcement of national supercomputing infrastructure and support for the establishment of a European AI gigafactory in Portugal. The plan also provides for the rollout of focused data spaces and the opening of funding calls for both fundamental and applied AI research projects.

Further measures include the creation of sector specific AI centres, targeted programmes to encourage AI adoption by small and medium-sized enterprises, and the continuation and expansion of the AMALIA Portuguese-language AI model.

The Agenda foresees a review of the intellectual property regime applicable to AI, including patentability criteria and the regulatory framework, expected in the first half of 2026, with the aim of providing clearer standards for research institutions and companies.

In addition, an AI Centre of Excellence will be established within public administration to strengthen governance and support the effective deployment of AI solutions.

Total planned investment exceeds €400 million through 2030, largely financed by EU funds.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Implementation follows a phased approach. Preparatory measures began in the second half of 2025 and include the deployment and expansion of supercomputing capacity, the finalisation of the National

Data Centres Plan, and early support mechanisms for AI adoption by small and medium-sized enterprises.

The main rollout, however, will take place in the current year, with the rollout of sector-specific data spaces, AI training programmes, public-sector AI governance structures, funding calls for research and applied projects, and operationally ready for service of AI centres.

From 2027 onwards, the focus shifts to scaling, consolidation, and continuous monitoring, with implementation extending through 2030.

FINAL REMARKS

The agenda is expected to have its greatest impact on technology companies, AI developers, startups, and data centre operators, which stand to benefit from infrastructure support, funding opportunities, and increased regulatory protection and clarity.

Corporations adopting AI at scale, particularly in the health, manufacturing, industry, and services sectors, will gain access to specialised centres and applied research support.

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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