Implementation Snapshot 2026

One Year of the Hamburg Declaration on Responsible AI for the Sustainable Development Goals

Facilitated by

Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

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From Vision to Action: One Year of Impact

The Hamburg Declaration on Responsible AI for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and numerous global partners. Launched at the Hamburg Sustainability Conference (HSC) in 2025, it is the first global multi-stakeholder declaration dedicated specifically to artificial intelligence (AI) and international development cooperation. The Declaration establishes a shared commitment to ensuring that AI is developed and deployed in ways that are inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and aligned with the priorities of the Global South.

As AI rapidly emerged as a transformative force with the potential to accelerate progress across the SDGs, a global conversation began to take shape around a fundamental question: how can AI be harnessed to advance sustainable development and shared prosperity while ensuring that its benefits are broadly distributed, its risks are responsibly managed, and no country or community is left behind?

What began as a shared vision was translated into a set of principles structured around the five dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships. Building on this foundation, UNDP and BMZ convened an extensive year-long consultation process involving governments, international organizations, private sector actors, civil society, academia, and development partners. Through discussions held across major international forums, stakeholders worked together to a common approach to responsible AI in the context of sustainable development.

The result was the Hamburg Declaration on Responsible AI for the SDGs and the emergence of a growing community of practice committed to turning principles into action. One year later, a growing community of endorsers from governments, international and regional organizations, private sector companies, civil society organizations, and research institutions is translating this vision into concrete initiatives, policies, investments, and partnerships that are already delivering tangible results for people and the planet.

In June 2025, the Hamburg AI Declaration represented a promise. One year on, it is delivering results. Endorsers are shaping policies, strengthening governance frameworks, building digital public goods, training people in AI skills, expanding access to local-language technologies, and deploying responsible AI solutions in areas including health, education, agriculture, climate action, and justice.

Photo: Hamburg Sustainability Conference

Prepared ahead of the HSC 2026, this Implementation Snapshot 2026 presents the first stock-taking of that progress. Drawing on contributions from endorsers, it highlights emerging implementation trends, showcases practical examples of responsible AI in action, identifies common challenges, and distills lessons that can help scale impact in the years ahead. While the journey is only beginning, the experiences captured here demonstrate a clear shift from commitments toward implementation - and from vision toward action.

Photo: Hamburg Sustainability Conference

Hamburg Declaration on Responsible AI for the SDGs: Our Journey

2024

- Vision → Digitalization & AI Hub launched at HSC
- Principles Paper + SDG AI Compendium
- Global consultations across governments, international organizations, private sector, academia and civil society

2025

- Hamburg AI Declaration launched
- Declaration Implementation → Putting Commitments into Action

2026

- Implementation Snapshot: One Year of Impact

Five Signals from First Year of Implementation

The first year of implementation under the Hamburg Declaration on Responsible AI for the SDGs reveals five emerging signals about what it takes to translate responsible AI ambitions into meaningful development outcomes. While the examples featured in this Snapshot represent a subset of the Declaration community, they point to a number of common patterns in how endorsing organizations are advancing responsible AI for sustainable development across different sectors, regions, and contexts.

Together, these observations offer an early picture of what responsible AI implementation looks like in practice and what approaches show the greatest promise. They also highlight where momentum is building and where opportunities exist to accelerate impact through greater collaboration, investment, and knowledge sharing.

1 Strong Foundations Matter

Many contributors emphasized that successful AI adoption depends on more than technology alone. Responsible AI cannot be built on weak foundations. Investments in skills, data, sustainable infrastructure, compute capacity, and governance frameworks repeatedly emerged as critical enabling factors. Whether supporting access to compute through the AI Hub for Sustainable Development, strengthening regional AI governance through the East African Community, or advancing responsible AI maturity among mobile network operators through GSMA, organizations are investing in the foundational capacities needed to support long-term and sustainable AI adoption. One year on, the evidence suggests that strong institutions, reliable infrastructure, quality data, effective governance, and skilled people are often what determine whether AI initiatives can move beyond pilots and deliver lasting development impact.

2 Capacity Building Is the Common Starting Point

If there is one area where implementation efforts converge, it is capacity building. Nearly every endorser identified AI literacy, skills development, and institutional readiness as essential foundations for responsible AI adoption. Financed by BMZ and implemented by GIZ, FAIR Forward reported training more than 256,000 people in Africa and Asia through AI-related capacity-building initiatives. The East African Community (EAC) trained 320 policymakers across 8 countries. Mobile Web Ghana established AI Clubs and trained nearly 1,000 students, educators, and community members. Through its Digital Capacity Lab and country-level engagements, UNDP has helped equip public-sector leaders across 80+ developing countries and island states with the skills needed to govern and deploy emerging technologies, including AI. Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) also co-led the establishment of the AI for Development Funders Collaborative to help coordinate and scale AI capacity-building efforts across the Global South. Across contexts, the lesson is consistent: responsible AI begins with people and skills.

3 Open and Collaborative Ecosystem Accelerate Scale

A recurring lesson from the first year of implementation is that responsible AI is most effective when organizations invest not only in individual projects, but also in the broader ecosystems that enable innovation, adoption, and scale. Across the Declaration community, endorsers are helping build open and collaborative ecosystems through open-source technologies, digital public goods, shared datasets, research networks, innovation platforms, regional alliances, and sustainable financing mechanisms. Examples such as UNDP's AI Hub for Sustainable Development, Germany's support for open-source AI models and datasets through FAIR Forward, GSMA's African AI Languages initiative, the EAC AI Alliance, and CODES demonstrate how coordinated investments across these interconnected elements can create conditions for long-term impact. One year on, a clear pattern is emerging: while individual projects can demonstrate what is possible, strong ecosystems with interconnected elements and sustainable financing are what enable responsible AI to grow, adapt, and scale.

4 Local Context Drives Impact

Many endorsers stressed the importance of designing AI initiatives around local realities, priorities, and communities. Local-language technologies, context-specific governance approaches, local data, local talent development, and community ownership were repeatedly identified as critical drivers of impact. From GSMA's African AI Languages initiative and Mobile Web Ghana's AI Clubs to UNDP's Local Language Accelerator and support for nationally led AI strategies, a common lesson emerges: AI initiatives are most effective when they reflect local needs, capabilities, and aspirations rather than relying on one-size-fits-all approaches. AI delivers the greatest impact when it is built with communities, not simply deployed for them.

5 Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration Drives Implementation

One of the most consistent themes emerging from the first year of implementation is the role of partnerships. Endorsers frequently identified collaboration across governments, international organizations, academia, civil society, and the private sector as a key factor behind progress. Whether through FAIR Forward's broad ecosystem of collaborators, GSMA's African language coalition, the EAC AI Alliance, CODES' efforts to convene diverse stakeholders around sustainable AI, or country-level governance initiatives, progress is being driven by organizations that bring together complementary expertise, resources, and perspectives. One year after the launch of the Hamburg AI Declaration, the evidence suggests that partnerships are not simply supporting implementation - they are the implementation model, the mechanism through which responsible AI is being built, governed, and scaled, enabling organizations to translate shared ambitions into tangible impact.

Taken together, these observations suggest that responsible AI is not defined by any single technology, policy, or institution. Rather, it emerges through investments in people, capabilities, governance, and partnerships that enable AI to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development outcomes.

Responsible AI Across the Five Ps

The Hamburg Declaration on Responsible AI for SDGs is structured around the five pillars of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships. The experiences shared by endorsers demonstrate how responsible AI is contributing across each of these interconnected priorities.


Photo: UNDP

People - Building Skills, Inclusion, and Opportunity

People-centered approaches are a defining characteristic of responsible AI. Endorsers are investing in AI literacy, workforce development, digital inclusion, child protection, and leadership development to ensure that the benefits of AI are widely shared. From policymakers and parliamentarians to students, entrepreneurs, and underserved communities, the focus is increasingly on equipping people with the skills, opportunities, and safeguards needed to participate in an AI-enabled future.

256,000+ people trained in AI-related skills across Africa and Asia through the German development cooperation's FAIR Forward initiative.

270,000 children reached through UNICEF-supported AI-enabled immunization efforts, demonstrating how AI can strengthen public services while maintaining a strong focus on inclusion and protection.

Children and youth introduced to AI skills through Mobile Web Ghana's AI Clubs and AI literacy programmes, helping build the next generation of responsible AI users and innovators.

Over 350 women leaders from 60+ countries empowered through GIZ's FemAI initiative, strengthening participation and leadership in AI governance and policymaking.

Parliamentarians and senior legislative staff trained through UNDP's AI for Parliamentarians programme, helping strengthen public-sector capacity for AI governance, regulation, and oversight.

AI expanded to 61 African languages through GSMA's African AI Languages initiative, including the launch of Africa First Models such as Swahili Reasoning and CommonLingua, alongside the development of Africa-first reasoning benchmarks in 5 languages.


Photo: Canva

Planet - Ensuring Sustainable AI and AI for Sustainability

As AI adoption accelerates, organizations are increasingly focused on both harnessing AI to address environmental challenges and managing its environmental footprint. Across the Hamburg Declaration community, efforts are emerging to apply AI to climate adaptation, environmental monitoring, and sustainable resource management, while also advancing new approaches to measuring and governing the sustainability impacts of AI systems.

AI-powered tools developed to support climate and environmental action, including the open-source NegotiateCOP platform, developed through a collaboration of German federal ministries and government agencies to help negotiators analyze complex UN climate negotiation texts, and a new AI-powered e-waste detection application in Ghana designed to improve recycling processes and support a more circular economy.

Global efforts advanced to promote environmentally responsible AI through CODES, helping elevate sustainability considerations in AI governance and international policy discussions.

91 local open-source datasets and 50+ open-source local AI models and building blocks developed and supported through the German development cooperation's FAIR Forward initiative for climate protection and food security.

AI applied to environmental monitoring through UNICEF's air-quality modelling initiatives in Lao PDR, generating insights to support public health and environmental resilience.

AI explored for disaster preparedness and resilience planning through UNDP's work in crisis and fragile settings, helping strengthen anticipatory action and risk-informed decision-making.

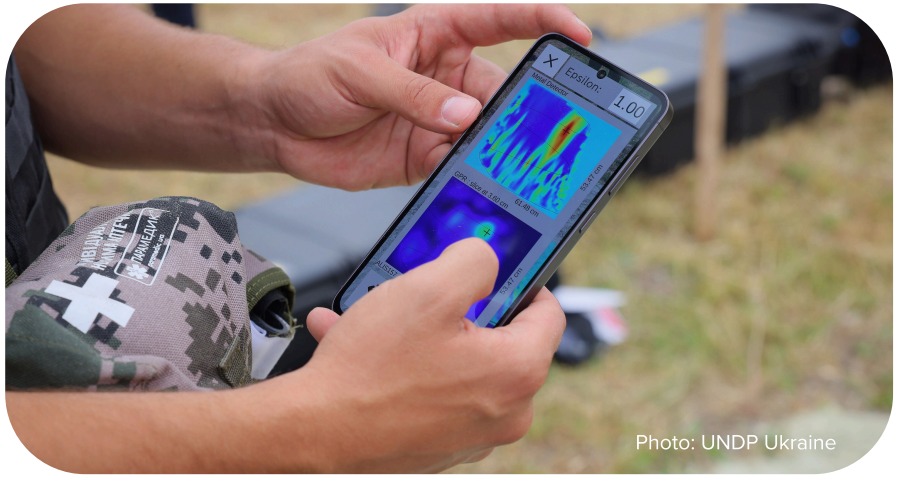

Photo: UNDP Ukraine


Photo: UNDP Costa Rica

Prosperity - Creating Innovation, Opportunity, and Inclusive Growth

Many endorsers view AI as a catalyst for entrepreneurship, productivity, innovation, and economic opportunity. Rather than focusing solely on technology adoption, initiatives increasingly seek to strengthen the ecosystems that enable innovators and businesses to thrive, including access to talent, financing, infrastructure, mentorship, and markets. This reflects a broader understanding that inclusive prosperity depends on ensuring that emerging AI opportunities are accessible across regions and communities. Several initiatives are also exploring how to promote sustainable and resource-efficient AI innovation, ensuring that economic opportunities created by AI are aligned with broader environmental and social objectives.

1.5 million GPU hours mobilized, 54 innovators supported, and 65+ collaborations launched through UNDP's AI Hub for Sustainable Development, helping innovators across developing countries access the compute, partnerships, and technical resources needed to develop AI solutions.

3,900+ innovators and youth engaged through the East African Community's AI4EAC Innovation Challenge, alongside the creation of a regional AI research network and implementation of a regional AI strategy.

£1.8 million mobilized for 8 AI ventures across 6 emerging markets through GSMA's Innovation Fund for Impactful AI, supporting solutions in health, agriculture, education, trade, and language inclusion.

Photo: Canva

Peace - Strengthening Governance, Integrity, Rights, and Accountability

Responsible AI requires institutions capable of managing risks, protecting rights, and building trust. Across regions, endorsers are developing governance frameworks, accountability mechanisms, digital rights tools, certification approaches, and policy guidance to help ensure that AI systems are deployed safely and responsibly. These efforts highlight the growing shift from broad governance principles toward practical tools and institutional arrangements that can guide implementation.

Access to justice advanced through Pathfinders' work on AI and justice, exploring how AI can strengthen legal empowerment, improve access to services, and support more people-centered justice systems.

Human rights safeguards integrated into digital development projects through KfW's Digital Rights Check, an open-source tool that helps identify and address risks related to privacy, non-discrimination, gender equality, freedom of expression, and data protection across the project lifecycle.

Worker-centered accountability mechanisms advanced through Fairwork's AI Supply Chain Audit and Certification framework, promoting transparency, fair labour practices, and responsible management of AI-enabled work.

Anticipatory governance approaches advanced through UNDP's Trust and Safety Reimagined Lab, which convened 17 global teams to co-create practical tools and governance solutions that help countries identify, mitigate, and respond to emerging AI risks and harms.

Partnerships - Building Coalitions for Scale

No organization can advance responsible AI alone. Across every area of implementation, partnerships emerged as a critical enabler of progress. Governments, international organizations, businesses, academia, and civil society are combining expertise, resources, and networks to address shared challenges and scale promising solutions. The experience of the first year suggests that partnerships are an essential mechanism through which Responsible AI is advancing sustainable development outcomes at scale.

Over 30 organizations joined forces through GSMA's African AI Languages initiative, bringing together researchers, innovators, telecom operators, universities, and development partners to build open AI models and benchmarks for African languages.

BMZ-supported collaboration through the East African Community AI Alliance to develop a regional EAC declaration, a validated AI strategy, and an implementation agenda anchored in responsible AI principles.

Through the G7-endorsed AI Hub for Sustainable Development, co-led by UNDP and the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy, new models of international cooperation are helping unlock resources, strengthen local AI ecosystems across 18 partner countries, and build the foundations for inclusive and sustainable AI adoption.

A global coalition for sustainable AI advanced through CODES, which convenes stakeholders across governments, international organizations, academia, civil society, and industry to align digital transformation with environmental sustainability goals.

A broad ecosystem of governments, private sector companies, research institutions, civil society organizations, and technology communities mobilized through FAIR Forward to expand access to open-source AI technologies, datasets, and digital public goods across Africa and Asia.

Photo: Canva

Common Challenges and Emerging Gaps

While the experiences captured in this Snapshot demonstrate significant progress, they also highlight a common set of challenges. Across regions and sectors, organizations continue to face barriers related to infrastructure, skills, governance, and coordination. Addressing these gaps will be critical to ensuring that the benefits of AI are accessible, sustainable, and inclusive.

Challenge 1: Infrastructure and Compute Remain Unevenly Distributed

Access to compute infrastructure, data resources, connectivity, and technical tools remains one of the most frequently cited constraints to AI adoption. While interest in AI is growing rapidly, many organizations and countries continue to face barriers in accessing the infrastructure needed to develop, test, and deploy AI solutions at scale. This challenge is particularly pronounced in low- and middle-income countries, where gaps in compute capacity can limit participation in the global AI ecosystem and constrain local innovation.

Photo: UNDP Guinea-Bissau

Challenge 2: Building Skills Faster Than Technology Evolves

Many endorsers noted that institutional capacity and human capital continue to lag behind the pace of technological change. Policymakers, regulators, educators, and public servants are increasingly expected to make decisions about technologies that are evolving rapidly and often outpacing existing knowledge and training systems. Beyond technical expertise, organizations emphasized the need for leadership capacity, governance skills, and a broader understanding of AI's social and economic implications.

Challenge 3: Translating Governance into Practice

As AI adoption accelerates, endorsers are grappling with how to operationalize principles such as transparency, accountability, safety, fairness, and human rights. While many countries and institutions have developed strategies, frameworks, and ethical guidelines, implementing these principles in practice remains an ongoing challenge. Endorsers highlighted the need for practical governance tools, clear institutional mandates, risk management approaches, and mechanisms for oversight and accountability.

Challenge 4: Coordination in an Increasingly Complex Landscape

AI governance and implementation involve a growing number of actors across governments, private sector companies, research institutions, civil society organizations, and international and regional bodies. While this diversity creates opportunities for innovation and collaboration, it can also lead to fragmentation, duplication, and unclear institutional responsibilities. Several endorsers highlighted the importance of coordination mechanisms that can align priorities, foster interoperability, and support collective action across sectors and borders.

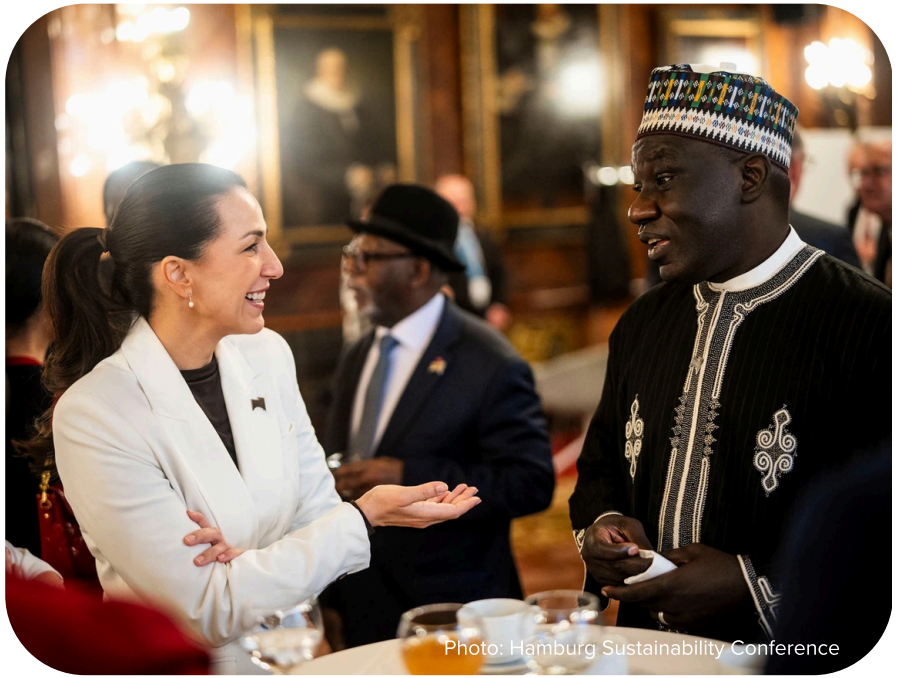

Photo: Hamburg Sustainability Conference

Looking Ahead: Scaling What Works

One year after its launch, the Hamburg Declaration on Responsible AI for the SDGs is demonstrating that responsible AI can deliver real development impact. Across sectors and regions, endorsers are turning a shared vision into practical action: training people, expanding local-language technologies, strengthening governance frameworks, supporting innovation ecosystems, and deploying AI solutions that address pressing development challenges.

The first year also offers a clearer understanding of what enables progress. While contexts differ, a common set of priorities is emerging:

- Invest in AI skills and institutional capacity
- Expand local-language and locally owned open AI ecosystems
- Increase access to compute, data, and digital public goods
- Operationalize governance through practical tools and safeguards
- Promote environmentally sustainable and resource-efficient AI development and deployment
- Strengthen partnerships across sectors, regions, and communities

No single organization can advance these priorities alone. The experience of the first year demonstrates that responsible AI is most effective when governments, international organizations, businesses, academia, and civil society work together to combine resources, expertise, and perspectives.

As the Hamburg AI Declaration community continues to grow, the opportunity now is to move from individual success stories to shared systems of impact. HSC 2026 marks not an endpoint, but the beginning of the next phase: scaling what works, deepening collaboration, and ensuring that the benefits of AI contribute to sustainable development for all.

Photo: Hamburg Sustainability Conference

Methodology note: Prepared ahead of the Hamburg Sustainability Conference 2026, this Implementation Snapshot presents a curated overview of implementation progress under the Hamburg Declaration on Responsible AI for the SDGs. The findings draw on voluntary contributions submitted by 13 endorsers as part of a one-year stock-taking exercise and highlight selected initiatives, impact stories, lessons learned, challenges, and emerging trends from across the Declaration community. The examples, statistics, and results presented are self-reported by contributing organizations and do not seek to represent the full scope of activities undertaken by all endorsers.

List of Endorsements

(as of June 2026)

AI & Equality Human Rights Initiative
AI Hub Senegal
Aleph Alpha GmbH
AT Worthy
Audiopedia Foundation
Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC)
Breakthrough Attorneys
Civic Data Lab
Coalition for Digital Environmental Sustainability (CODES)
Common Room Networks Foundation
CommonsTech Foundation for Participatory Technologies
Data Science Nigeria
DEKRA e.V.
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland
Disability Ethical AI
East African Community
Evolution University
Fadwa AlBawardi Consulting (FSAB)
Fairwork
Federal Ministry European and International Affairs, Republic of Austria
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany (BMZ)
German Environment Agency
Global Affairs Canada
Global Organization for Academic Leadership and Public Services (GOALPS)
Global Solutions Initiative Foundation gemeinnützige GmbH
Gram Vaani
GSMA
HealthAI – The Global Agency for Responsible AI in Health
Humane Intelligence
International Data Spaces e. V.
International Fund for Public Interest Media (IFPIM)
International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence (IRCAI)
Karya Inc.
Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)
Local Development Research Institute
Masakhane
Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil
Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Slovenia
Mobile Web Ghana
Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (hosted by NYU Center on International Cooperation)
Pollicy
Punto Claro Consulting
Sand Technologies
She Shapes AI
Smart Africa
TATA Consultancy Services Limited
TECHPOOL SARL
Technical University of Munich Institute for Ethics in AI
Tech Global Institute
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
United Nations University
Wikimedia Deutschland – Gesellschaft zur Förderung Freien Wissens e. V.
WILO Group
Women in AI