INTAI

DOWNLOADABLE GUIDE

IMPLEMENTATION

# AI Implementation Roadmap

A practical roadmap for moving from AI opportunity and planning through governance, delivery, deployment, adoption and ongoing improvement.

INTAI LIMITED
AI Governance & Assurance Consultancy

www.intai.co.uk
2026 Edition

# Contents

1 From Opportunity to Plan

2 Building the Governance Foundation

3 Delivery: Building or Buying Well

4 Deployment: Going Live Responsibly

5 Adoption: Making AI Stick

6 Continuous Improvement

# AI Implementation Roadmap

A practical roadmap for moving from AI opportunity and planning through governance, delivery, deployment, adoption and ongoing improvement.

> Moving from an AI opportunity to sustained organisational value involves more distinct stages than most implementation plans account for — and most AI initiatives that disappoint do so not because of a single failure, but because one of these stages was skipped or rushed. This roadmap sets out a practical path from opportunity and planning through governance, delivery, deployment, adoption and ongoing improvement.

CHAPTER 1 · OPPORTUNITY

# From Opportunity to Plan

Every AI implementation begins with an opportunity, but not every opportunity is ready to become a plan. The organisations that implement AI most successfully spend deliberate time confirming a genuine business need, realistic data availability, and organisational readiness before committing significant resource.

> *The most expensive AI failures are rarely technical — they are opportunities that were never really ready to begin with.*

This stage should produce a clear, specific plan: the business problem being solved, the expected value, the data required, and a realistic view of feasibility given current organisational capability. Skipping this stage in favour of moving quickly to build almost always costs more time later.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Not every AI opportunity is immediately ready to become an implementation plan.
- Confirming business need, data availability and organisational readiness early saves time later.
- A rushed transition from opportunity to build is a common, avoidable cause of AI implementation failure.

CHAPTER 2 · GOVERNANCE

# Building the Governance Foundation

Governance should be established alongside planning, not retrofitted after delivery begins. This includes confirming the use case has been through appropriate risk screening, has a named accountable owner, and has a clear governance route matched to its risk level.

| GOVERNANCE STEP | WHEN IT SHOULD HAPPEN |
|---|---|
| Use case logged and screened | Before significant planning resource is committed |
| Risk assessment completed | Before development or procurement begins |
| Governance approval obtained | Before deployment, proportionate to risk |
| Inventory entry created | Ahead of go-live, not after |

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Governance should be built alongside implementation planning, not added after delivery has begun.
- Risk screening and assessment should precede significant development or procurement commitment.
- An inventory entry should exist before go-live, not be added retrospectively.

CHAPTER 3 · DELIVERY

# Delivery: Building or Buying Well

Most organisations, particularly SMEs and public sector bodies, are better served by configuring or buying existing AI capability than building custom models from scratch. This is not a compromise — it is usually the more proportionate, better-governed choice, provided vendor due diligence is genuinely thorough.

### Delivery Discipline That Pays Off

Whether building or buying, delivery should include realistic testing against representative scenarios, not only convenient ones, and should validate the system against the acceptance criteria agreed during planning — not criteria discovered informally as delivery progresses.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Configuring or buying existing AI capability is usually more proportionate than custom building for most organisations.
- Buying does not reduce the need for thorough vendor due diligence.
- Testing should validate against acceptance criteria agreed during planning, not criteria improvised later.

CHAPTER 4 · DEPLOYMENT

# Deployment: Going Live Responsibly

Deployment should be a deliberate, governed decision, not an automatic consequence of development finishing. This includes final governance sign-off, confirmed human oversight arrangements, and monitoring in place before, not after, the system goes live.

1. Has final governance approval been obtained, reflecting the system as it will actually be deployed?
2. Is human oversight responsibility clearly assigned, with genuine authority to intervene?
3. Is monitoring in place from the moment of go-live, not added once an issue has already occurred?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Deployment should be a deliberate governance decision, not an automatic outcome of finished development.
- Human oversight arrangements should be confirmed and genuinely authoritative before go-live.
- Monitoring should begin at go-live, not be introduced reactively after a problem emerges.

CHAPTER 5 · ADOPTION

# Adoption: Making AI Stick

Deployment and adoption are not the same milestone. A system can be technically live and barely used, used incorrectly, or used without the confidence needed to realise its intended value. Adoption requires deliberate investment in communication, training and support, planned alongside delivery rather than considered only once the system is already live.

> *A deployed system nobody trusts or uses well has delivered infrastructure, not value.*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Deployment and genuine adoption are distinct milestones, not the same event.
- Adoption requires deliberate investment in communication, training and support.
- Adoption planning should happen alongside delivery, not begin only after go-live.

CHAPTER 6 · IMPROVEMENT

# Continuous Improvement

Implementation does not end at successful adoption. The most mature AI implementations include a standing process for reviewing performance, incorporating user feedback, and reassessing whether the system continues to deliver the value originally expected.

This final stage is where the roadmap becomes cyclical rather than linear: lessons from live systems should inform how the organisation screens, plans and delivers its next AI opportunity, closing the loop back to the beginning of the roadmap.

> **WHERE TO GO NEXT**
>
> INTAI's AI Project Initiation Template and AI Deployment Checklist provide practical documents for applying this roadmap to a specific initiative, stage by stage.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Implementation success should be reviewed continuously, not assumed once adoption is achieved.
- Lessons from live systems should inform how future AI opportunities are screened and planned.
- Treating implementation as cyclical, not linear, is what sustains long-term AI value.

INTAI

## Want support applying this guide?

INTAI works with organisations across Europe — from SMEs to public sector bodies and larger enterprises — to turn AI governance guidance into a practical, proportionate programme. If you would like support applying the ideas in this guide to your own organisation, our team is glad to help.

**www.intai.co.uk | hello@intai.co.uk**

© 2026 INTAI Limited. This guide is provided for general guidance purposes only and does not constitute legal, regulatory or professional advice. Organisations should adapt it to their own context and seek independent advice where appropriate.