

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MEITY'S NEW AI GOVERNANCE GUIDELINES



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping how societies function, from healthcare and education to governance and finance. Recognising both its promise and perils, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) recently unveiled the India AI Governance Guidelines, 2025¹ a landmark framework to steer the responsible and inclusive development of AI in the country.

As Prof. Ravindran stated,

“We’re calling this the AI Governance Guidelines, not AI regulation, because we don’t want it to be viewed as something that throttles AI adoption in India.”²

These guidelines mark India’s first comprehensive attempt to establish a governance-first approach, focusing on building trust and accountability while allowing innovation to thrive. Unlike jurisdictions introducing heavy compliance burdens, India seeks a balanced, agile, and pro-innovation model that reflects its unique social and economic context.

The Seven Guiding Principles

The India AI Governance Guidelines rest on seven key principles (or “sutras”) that shape the foundation of responsible AI development:

- Trust is the Foundation - Building confidence in AI systems through transparency, safety, and reliability.
- People First - Ensuring that AI empowers humans and aligns with societal values.
- Innovation over Restraint - Prioritising responsible innovation that drives socio-economic growth.
- Fairness and Equity - Preventing bias and discrimination, particularly against marginalised groups.
- Accountability - Defining clear responsibility across developers, deployers, and users.
- Understandability - Making AI systems explainable and interpretable to users and regulators.
- Safety, Resilience, and Sustainability - Encouraging robust, secure, and environmentally responsible AI.

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- These principles aim to balance progress with protection - allowing India to adopt AI responsibly while staying globally competitive.

The Action Plan: Building the Roadmap

To operationalise these principles, the guidelines include a three-phase Action Plan:

Short-Term Goals

- Establish an AI Governance Group (AIGG) as a high-level policymaking body.
- Set up a Technology & Policy Expert Committee (TPEC) for technical guidance.
- Develop India-specific AI risk classification frameworks.
- Identify regulatory gaps and suggest legal amendments.
- Launch AI awareness and training programmes for citizens and regulators.
- Prepare systems for AI incident reporting and grievance redressal.

Medium-Term Goals

- Publish common AI standards for content authentication, data integrity, fairness, and cybersecurity.
- Operationalise a national AI incident database with feedback loops.
- Introduce amendments to existing laws wherever gaps are identified.

Long-Term Goals

- Pilot regulatory sandboxes in high-risk areas like healthcare and finance.
- Integrate Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) with AI systems.
- Adopt new laws only if emerging risks justify them.
- Strengthen global engagement and standard-setting collaborations.

This structured plan reflects India's commitment to move gradually from capacity building to formal regulation ensuring innovation remains ahead of bureaucracy.

Institutional Framework for AI Governance

The framework also maps an institutional ecosystem for coordination and accountability:

- AI Governance Group (AIGG): Central policy-making body coordinating across ministries.



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- MeitY: Nodal ministry responsible for overall governance and implementation.
- AI Safety Institute (AIS): Promotes safe and trustworthy AI innovation through research collaboration.
- Sectoral Regulators (RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, TRAI, ICMR, etc.): Enforce sector-specific AI norms.
- BIS and TEC: Develop testing, certification, and technical standards.
- NITI Aayog and Office of the PSA: Provide strategic oversight and inter-ministerial coordination.

This “whole-of-government” approach ensures India’s AI governance remains coordinated, adaptive, and informed by domain expertise.

Guidelines for Industry and Regulators

The guidelines provide practical recommendations for both innovators and enforcement agencies.

For Industry:

- Comply with all Indian laws, including IT, data protection, and consumer protection statutes.
- Adopt voluntary standards on privacy, fairness, and transparency.
- Establish grievance redressal mechanisms for AI-related harms.
- Publish transparency reports assessing risks and mitigation steps.
- Explore techno-legal tools like bias detection and privacy-enhancing technologies.

For Regulators:

- Encourage innovation while safeguarding citizens’ rights.
- Use risk-based, proportionate policy instruments rather than rigid licensing systems.
- Focus on addressing real and immediate harms, such as threats to life or livelihood.
- Periodically review and update frameworks based on stakeholder feedback.

Together, these measures promote collaboration instead of confrontation between industry and government ensuring AI evolves responsibly.

Conclusion



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The India AI Governance Guidelines, 2025 signal a defining moment in the country's digital evolution. By focusing on trust, transparency, and technological empowerment, MeitY has set the foundation for a future where AI serves people not the other way around.

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