AMERICAN CHAMBER of COMMERCE IRELAND

Artificial Intelligence

A Blueprint for Ireland's AI Leadership

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The American Chamber of Commerce Ireland
The Voice of US-Ireland Business

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Contents

Key Recommendations 4

Foreword 6

A National AI Office & Government Strategy 7

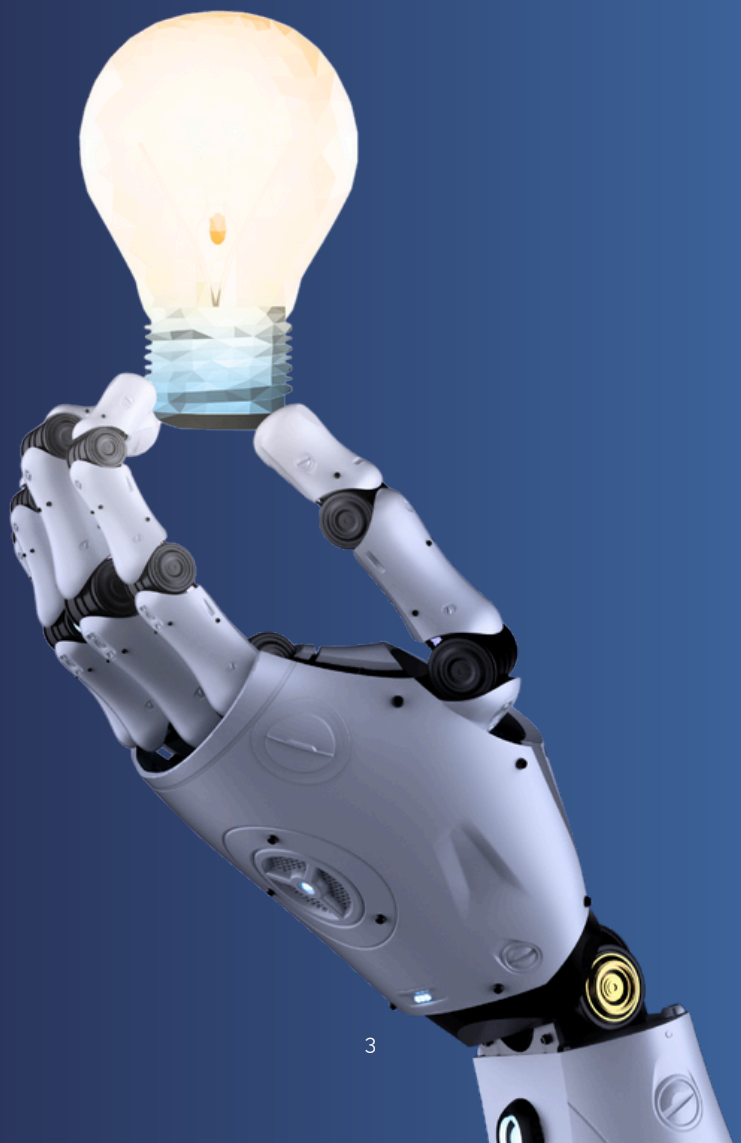
Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union 9

Supporting AI Development & Adoption 10

Infrastructure to Enable Ireland's AI Future 12

Empowering Talent and Skills 14

AI Regulation 16



Key Recommendations:

A National AI Office & Government Strategy:

- The publication of a forward looking, ambitious National Digital and AI Strategy that supports business decision-making and investment.
- Identify Ireland's AI priorities and opportunities for specialisation, with in-built measurable performance indicators that are above EU averages.
- Establish the National AI Office with adequate resourcing and legal authority to ensure consistent, coherent and pro-competitive application of AI regulation across the designated regulators.
- Integrate AI in all Government services with the goal of delivering better and more efficient public services at the scale required by Irish society and businesses.

Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union:

- Champion AI and emerging technology at home and abroad, particularly through Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.
- Use Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union to champion competitiveness and AI adoption at home and abroad, alongside a simpler rulebook.
- Utilise Ireland's planned AI Summit to demonstrate global leadership in AI, its long-term commitment to responsible AI development and adoption, and signal that Ireland remains one of the premier locations to do business, in the AI era.

Supporting AI Development & Adoption:

- A continued focus on supporting RD&I activity within Ireland, through enhanced incentives.
- Clear, measurable targets be published to increase the number of AI clusters and innovation hubs in Ireland.
- The development and implementation of further start-up capital funding supports that facilitate growth at scale.
- The establishment of a singular source of information for AI start-up policy, funding supports, and regulatory information.
- Develop AI Centres of Excellence through industry-state body cooperation to enhance Ireland's position as an AI leader.
- Make AI tools available to entrepreneurs and scientists so they can use AI in support of other discoveries and innovations.

Infrastructure to Enable Ireland's AI Future:

- Provide multi-annual funding for energy infrastructure investments and improvements.
- Clearly define timelines and targets for energy grid modernisation and enhancements, to boost investor confidence.
- Continued investment in the NCSC and cyber security infrastructure.

Empowering Talent & Skills

- Develop and publish an AI talent and skills strategy to include an ambitious upskilling and reskilling programme.
- Ensure the business community has the ability to attract world-leading AI talent to Ireland, through investment in housing, services, and quality of life.
- Establish an AI observatory to provide real-time insights and data analysis on emerging trends and skills demand.
- Develop avenues for regular industry, academia and Government dialogue to identify AI impacts and opportunities.
- Equip all students and workers, whether in traditional industries, SMEs, or the public sector, with foundational AI skills.
- Incorporate greater digital and technological literacy and use into educational curricula, treating AI as a core component of the educational system, to ensure individuals are equipped with digital skills across all disciplines.

AI Regulation:

- That the Government champions EU simplification, ensures consistent implementation and oversight within the decentralised model and advocates for robust measures to ease the administrative burden on businesses.
- That regulators ensure the sharing of essential information within the AI value chain and promote industry good practice to support the responsible adoption of AI, including to assess risks and inform compliance.
- That Ireland leverages its position as a regulatory hub to avoid the over regulation of the AI sector in Europe.
- That Government champions an ambitious approach to EU simplification and advocates for material changes to the EU's proposed approach to AI regulation so that European businesses and citizens can benefit from this generational opportunity.
- The continued enhancement of AI sandboxes to test AI regulatory practicability prior to introduction and implementation.
- That the Government ensures regulators account for the effect of regulation on competition, innovation and growth, and ensure transparent and consultative coordination across regulatory frameworks to maximise simplification and ease of compliance.
- That government should retain the existing EU framework to the copyright protection, which balances protection of rights with developing innovation, and has enabled a flourishing AI ecosystem in Europe.

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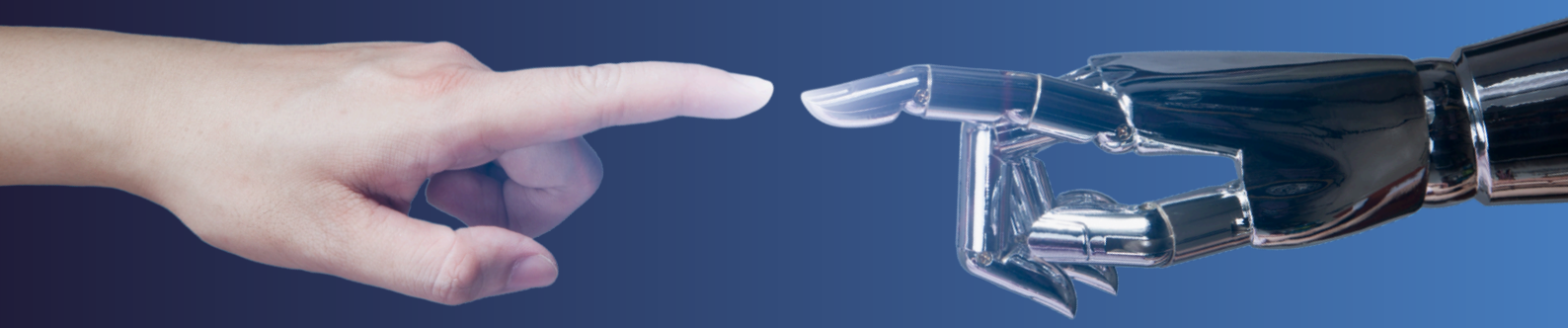
Foreword

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) represents a defining moment in the history of technological development, and with it, significant opportunities for economic growth exist. The potential of AI to dramatically change how services are provided, skills are prioritised, businesses develop and grow, and greater efficiencies are achieved across society underscores the importance of clear, timely and proactive Government policy and support.

The AI sector is defined by its significant competition and innovation, and the pace at which this technology is progressing. This is matched by increasing international competition in developing policy landscapes to attract AI investment. It is therefore vital that the Irish Government acts with speed to develop national AI policy frameworks and champions AI at home and abroad, while balancing AI development with appropriate safeguards and practical regulations. By doing so Ireland can attract greater investment and ensure that AI provides cross-societal benefits.

As a home to many world-leading technology companies, leading the development and deployment of AI, Ireland is well placed to position itself as a hub for AI research, innovation, and development, as well as demonstrating effective use-case implementation. In a recent AmCham member survey, conducted in July 2025, 65% of respondents identified AI, Automation and Data Analysis as an area of planned investment in the next twelve months, while 40% of respondents saw AI and emerging technologies as their greatest opportunity in Ireland in the next 5 years - the largest of any cohort and double the percentage of the nearest alternative.

Through decisive action from Government in defining the State's AI priorities, and developing necessary supports for the business community, Ireland can position itself as a global leader in AI development and adoption. In doing so, Ireland can ensure it is to the vanguard of innovation in AI into the future, securing key investments, accelerating productivity and driving a global impact from our island nation.



A National AI Office & Government Strategy

It is welcome that the Government has already taken steps to review and enhance Ireland's AI policy and strategy landscape, notably through the forthcoming publication of the revised National Digital and AI Strategy. The publication of this strategy will be a key component in charting a path forward for AI investment, both public and private, in Ireland. It is vital that the National Digital and AI Strategy provide a clear roadmap for Irish leadership in AI and is ambitious in how the Government will demonstrate and champion AI development and adoption.

Further, the commitment to develop a National AI Office, as detailed in the Government's Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity, represents an opportunity for Ireland to coordinate AI policy and development with a forward-looking, pro-enterprise approach. In the establishment of this office, it is important that the necessary authority and resourcing is given to achieve its stated goals and to fulfil its duties. Further, it is crucial that AI policy is coordinated in a whole-of-Government manner, with central decision-making capacity. The National AI Office will play a particularly important role in bringing coherence and consistency to the decentralised model of regulation announced by Government so that the regulatory environment supports long-term decision making and investment by businesses developing and adopting AI.

Taken together, the National AI Office's activities will enhance the ability of the Government to create policy that is flexible, agile and which can be implemented in a timely manner. This is of paramount importance due to the nascent nature of this policy field and the speed at which AI technology is advancing. Future investment will be won by jurisdictions in which certainty of timelines, supports, policy and regulation exist to support further innovation and growth.

Near-term decisions made by Government in defining Ireland's AI policy priorities and regulatory frameworks will have lasting impacts on the development of AI in Ireland, and Ireland's role in the global AI sector. At present, opportunities exist for Ireland to lead in AI use in areas including pharmaceutical and clinical trials, anti-fraud and risk management, and the use of AI in Government services to drive scale, productivity and efficiencies. By becoming a leader in specific AI use cases, Ireland can position itself as a dynamic, future-focused economy and attract future investment.

AmCham recommends:

- The publication of a forward looking, ambitious National Digital and AI Strategy that supports business decision-making and ibvestment.
- Identify Ireland's AI priorities and opportunities for specialisation, with in-built measurable performance indicators that are above EU averages.
- Establish the National AI Office with adequate resourcing and legal authority to ensure consistent, coherent and pro-competitive application of AI regulation across the designated regulators.
- Ensure that AI policy is developed in a whole-of-Government manner, with centralised decision making to achieve agile policy that keeps pace with AI development.
- Integrate AI in all Government services with the goal of delivering better and more efficient public services at the scale required by Irish society and businesses.

Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union

In July 2026, Ireland will begin its Presidency of the Council of the European Union. This gives Ireland an opportunity to champion AI and digitalisation on the international stage and set out an ambitious agenda for Europe to increase AI innovation and implementation. Through its Presidency, Ireland should refocus the debate around AI towards its practical adoption and the realisation of its societal and economic benefits, including through much needed regulatory simplification. As a leading voice for pro-enterprise, pro-innovation policies within the EU, Ireland should continue to demonstrate sensible leadership on EU proposals with a focus on competitiveness, legal certainty and simplifying the EU digital rulebook.

Further, the commitment from Government to hold an AI Summit, during Ireland's presidency of the Council of the European Union, offers a unique opportunity for Ireland to demonstrate global leadership in AI, attract investment and send a clear message that Ireland is one of the premier locations to do business, in the AI era. This requires a high level of ambition and resources to deliver a truly global summit that signals Ireland's competitiveness on world stage. The Government can use this moment to set out a comprehensive vision for responsible AI development and adoption in Ireland and the wider world, as well as leadership on AI regulation.

Furthermore, given the unique role played by Ireland from a regulatory view, this summit can kick-start an international dialogue on fostering trustworthy innovation, focusing on the interplay between innovation, regulation, and societal benefits. As home to leading businesses in this field, Ireland has the potential to attract AI entrepreneurs, thought leaders and key decision makers to this summit. It is vital that this summit showcases Ireland's clear, ambitious and long-term commitment to AI excellence, demonstrating a pathway to unlocking AI's significant societal and economic benefits while also ensuring trust, fairness and inclusivity.

AmCham recommends:

- Champion AI and emerging technology at home and abroad, particularly through Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.
- Use Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union to champion competitiveness and AI adoption at home and abroad, alongside a simpler rulebook.
- Utilise Ireland's planned AI Summit to demonstrate global leadership in AI, its long-term commitment to responsible AI development and adoption, and signal that Ireland remains one of the premier locations to do business, in the AI era.
- Establish thought leadership in the proportionate and pro-competitive regulation of AI development and adoption.

Supporting AI Development & Adoption

Industry-Government cooperation will play a vital role in developing Ireland's AI sector and placing Ireland at the forefront of the next wave of AI research, development and innovation. Fostering a greater level of R&D within Ireland is an important component in achieving this goal. The recent increase of the R&D tax credit to 35%, under Budget 2026, is welcome, however, Government must go further in developing frameworks and systems that allow the business community to engage with these processes in a more streamlined manner, as described below.

It is important to recognise that the AI opportunity is not only in the AI sector itself, but extends across every business and organisation in Ireland today, both within the public and private sectors. Accordingly, the economic potential of the ambitious and responsible adoption of AI across all sectors would be significantly larger than in the AI sector alone. By fostering a policy and funding landscape that supports the development of AI R&D clusters and the deployment of AI solutions specific to the needs of Irish businesses and other organisations, significant benefits would be provided in terms of the development of Ireland's AI offering, leading to organic growth, business transformation and increased productivity across sectors in the economy, and making Ireland a premier destination for innovation and investment.

Furthermore, this will provide a boost to start-up activity in Ireland, helping to ensure balanced growth across MNCs and SMEs. The global AI landscape is defined by its rapid pace of development and need for high levels of cooperation across sectors. Market norms include non-exclusivity agreements which allow start-ups to work with multiple large organisations at any one time, and allowing for market access, innovation and growth. Moreover, the cost of AI tokens has fallen at unprecedented speed in the past 18 months, down from $36 per million tokens to $0.25, this makes AI the greatest cost-depreciating technology that has ever been invented. This furthers the ability of start-ups to enter the market and grow at scale.

It is therefore important that Ireland develops a suite of incentives and supportive frameworks to attract innovation and drive start-up investments, and to promote adoption and deployment of AI solutions meeting local needs, which will precipitate future growth. Currently, capital funding made available, while welcome, does not facilitate growth at scale. This results in an unnecessary constraint being placed on a start-up's potential growth.

By enhancing funding streams and eligibility through key mechanisms, such as the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund (DTIF) and supports from Taighde Éireann - Research Ireland, for example, Ireland can further enhance its support for RD&I and strengthen its competitiveness to attract start-ups and RD&I projects. Moreover, enhancing supports like those provided through Taighde Éireann's AI for Societal Good Challenge, can encourage AI innovation that benefits all of society and develops solutions to some of the biggest challenges facing the global community. It is important that businesses can access a singular point of information with regard to Ireland's funding, regulatory and policy landscape, with clear timelines to bolster investor confidence.

The development of AI Centres of Excellence will also play a key role in furthering Ireland's reputation as an investment destination for AI projects. Working in cooperation with industry, Government can enable the establishment of more AI Centres of Excellence, through engagement that brings the business community, CeADAR, Enterprise Ireland, IDA and other state bodies together to drive innovation and best practices.

AmCham recommends:

- A continued focus on supporting RD&I activity within Ireland, through enhanced incentives.
- Clear, measurable targets be published to increase the number of AI clusters and innovation hubs in Ireland.
- The development and implementation of further start-up capital funding supports that facilitate growth at scale.
- Enhanced funding and broader eligibility criteria for RD&I projects through state bodies such as Taigdhe Éireann.
- The establishment of a singular source of information for AI start-up policy, funding supports, and regulatory information.
- Develop AI Centres of Excellence through industry-state body cooperation to enhance Ireland's position as an AI leader.
- Make AI tools available to entrepreneurs and scientists so they can use AI in support of other discoveries and innovations.

Infrastructure to Enable Ireland's AI Future

Underpinning Ireland's ability to scale up the domestic AI sector and the broad adoption of AI across sectors, is the need to enhance and modernise Ireland's physical and digital infrastructure. This is particularly important in the context of investing in Ireland's electricity grid. Current capacity and generation constraints in Ireland's electricity grid are having a direct impact on the whole of society and the economy. To optimise Ireland's AI potential and growth, improvements to the electricity grid must be a priority for Government.

The increase in funding, amounting to €3.5bn, for state bodies such as Eirgrid and ESB in Budget 2026 is welcomed, along with existing efforts by Government to accelerate infrastructure delivery. It is vital that clear signals are given to industry regarding the planned investments in critical infrastructure, including the electricity grid, with targets and implementation timelines regularly reviewed and updated. Through investment in Ireland's energy infrastructure, as well as developing greater levels of renewable energy generation, the Government can enable faster growth within the AI sector, and its adoption in the wider economy, while also ensuring that this growth is powered by environmentally sustainable energy.

Furthermore, the use of AI has the potential to positively impact all aspects of the energy industry and ecosystem. This includes the potential for greater network planning, with AI facilitating rapid evaluation of scenarios, optimising trade-offs in costs, network load and performance. AI can also unlock predictive maintenance, anticipating machine or other asset failure, allowing for proactive repairs and thus reducing maintenance and operating costs. Additionally, grid management can be enhanced by greater balancing of demand/load forecasting, and the further integration of renewable energy to the grid.

Moreover, the adoption and development of AI within the energy sector can facilitate the optimisation of energy trading strategies, as well as optimising energy consumption, resulting in lower energy costs, particularly within industrial operations.

Importantly, AI can also play a pivotal role in detecting and responding to potential cybersecurity threats in real-time, and in automating processes such as vulnerability management and incident reporting; resulting in attacks on energy and other infrastructure being mitigated.

As home to many existing data centres, Ireland plays a unique role within the EU. AI relies heavily on data and data centres, acting as a foundational component of AI development. By enhancing energy infrastructure, the increased demand for energy that is necessary for AI growth can be met without impacting on other sectors or supply. In achieving this, Ireland can continue to develop our dynamic economy, bringing increased prosperity and greater efficiencies that will ensure the benefits of AI's potential are shared across the population.

Without the necessary improvements to Ireland's energy infrastructure, Ireland risks missing out on investments and falling behind international competitors both within and outside the EU. At present, the European Commission anticipates that 15 AI factories will be operational in the EU by the end of 2026, bringing with them increased investment opportunities, innovation and AI infrastructure. Ireland is not a host nation of an AI factory but instead hosts an AI Factory Antenna, resulting in an opportunity cost to Ireland's AI sector. A further planned investment of €20bn will be made through the European Commission to develop 5 AI gigafactories.

Further, through the bolstering of Ireland's cybersecurity infrastructure and adequate resourcing for the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), the Government can encourage greater investor confidence in the resilience of Ireland's infrastructure, at a time of increasing global cyber security threats. Certainty of robust defence mechanisms and an ability to adapt to emerging threats, is key for business confidence in Ireland as an investment and growth location.

The completion of the rollout of the National Broadband Plan (NBP) will allow greater connection speed and access to the necessary digital infrastructure in rural Ireland to enhance AI, digital and emerging technology adoption across SMEs and start-ups.

AmCham recommends:

- Provide multi-annual funding for energy infrastructure investments and improvements.
- Development of the renewable energy sector and electricity grid capacity to accommodate greater energy generation.
- Clearly define timelines and targets for energy grid modernisation and enhancements, to boost investor confidence.
- Industry-Government cooperation to develop infrastructure to support the establishment of AI factories or gigafactories in Ireland in tandem with the European Commission.
- Continued investment in the NCSC and cyber security infrastructure.
- Ensuring the NCSC is adequately resourced to meet the needs of the State and to address emerging threats.
- Completion of the National Broadband Plan.

Empowering Talent & Skills

Currently, there is intense international competition for skills relating to AI. This has resulted in a significant rise in skills demand, and a greater focus on talent attraction and retention. Through Ireland's focus on attracting and retaining talent in the AI sector, AI Centres of Excellence and innovation clusters can be strengthened.

Companies often first compete with other internal teams and international locations to win AI projects. When successfully awarded these projects, growth and development of the team and the project itself follows at pace. This has the net effect of one project holding significant potential for job creation and specialisation of AI skills in a given location. It is critical that Ireland positions itself as a premier location for companies to develop AI teams and locations. To achieve this, the Government should develop and publish an AI talent and skills strategy, which incorporates an ambitious upskilling and reskilling programme, equips all students and workers with foundational AI skills, and embeds AI into school curricula. This will set Ireland on path towards success now and into the future, while also sending a clear and important signal regarding Ireland's commitment to AI.

This is underscored by the reality that the future of investment will be as much defined by where talent wants to live, as by where businesses want to operate. It is therefore vital that the Irish Government continues to improve the quality of life in Ireland, including improving transport and connectivity, increasing housing supply and investing in local infrastructure. In doing so Ireland will enhance its attractiveness for world-leading AI talent to locate in Ireland, further increasing Ireland's competitiveness for new AI projects.

The further integration of AI into society and business will have implications for the workforce, with greater automation and efficiencies created within the business ecosystem. It is therefore essential that Government remains in close dialogue with industry to adequately plan and adapt policy to ensure that AI benefits all levels of society through balanced growth.

Effective policy development requires a robust evidence base, allowing for timely insights and data analysis on the impacts and benefits of AI, both at home and abroad. The recommendation to establish an AI Observatory should be considered in this context, taking into account already available sources of data and analysis such as the OECD AI Policy Observatory and the Central Statistics Office. This will result in more effective policy implementation, build flexibility in policy development, provide critical foresight of emerging needs of society and business.

Developing an AI workforce with the right skills is key to ensuring the responsible development and adoption of AI across the economy. Ireland enjoys strong industry-academia partnerships, with a continued focus on the cooperation between academic institutions and industry, along with Government support, Ireland can ensure courses equip individuals with the required set of technical and societal skills, increase its skills pipeline,

provide pathways to employment, and critically increase its innovation and research landscape. Developing regular industry, academia and Government dialogue will also play a key role in the identifying emerging trends and gaps in skills demand and opportunities for the Irish economy. Further, close cooperation can facilitate greater use of technology within education and third level institutions to ensure that individuals are equipped with the skills and digital literacy necessary to enable life-long learning.

AmCham recommends:

- Develop and publish an AI talent and skills strategy to include an ambitious upskilling and reskilling programme.
- Ensure the business community has the ability to attract world-leading AI talent to Ireland, through investment in housing, services, and quality of life.
- Establish an AI observatory to provide real-time insights and data analysis on emerging trends and skills demand.
- Develop avenues for regular industry, academia and Government dialogue to identify AI impacts and opportunities.
- Equip all students and workers, whether in traditional industries, SMEs, or the public sector, with foundational AI skills.
- Incorporate greater digital and technological literacy and use into educational curricula, treating AI as a core component of the education system, to ensure individuals are equipped with digital skills across all disciplines.

AI Regulation

As home to many leading technology companies, Ireland holds a key position as a regulatory hub within the EU. This is of critical importance, particularly in the context of AI advancement and the competitiveness of Ireland and the broader EU. With the passage of the AI Act and a number of proposed implementation milestones contained within the Act falling during Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2026, Ireland has an opportunity to be a thought leader on AI regulation and governance.

Many leading voices have called for changes to the AI Act and its proposed implementation dates. As a pro-enterprise, pro-innovation country, the Irish Government should adopt a proactive position in shaping the debate at a European level. Along with the overall aim of the AI Act, namely, to promote public trust in AI, the focus of the EU should now be on ensuring proportionate implementation and delivering a truly risk-based approach that balances innovation and AI's benefits, while mitigating potential harms. The National AI Office should develop an approach that is future-proof and supports an AI regulatory landscape that recognises the rapid speed at which AI technologies are developing, and the need to align with emerging international standards.

In line with the Draghi Report and its objective to improve the EU's competitiveness, Ireland should champion European Union efforts to simplify the implementation and oversight of regulations. It will be important that this includes leading efforts to review existing and new regulatory frameworks to identify and eliminate contradictions and duplication or overlapping reporting requirements that could impact the adoption and future development of AI in the EU. Further it will be important to identify a hierarchy of EU regulations and establish clear, unified guidelines for the business community. This is of significant importance due to the dynamic nature of the AI sector, and it is critical to avoid over-regulation that would stifle growth and innovation in the sector.

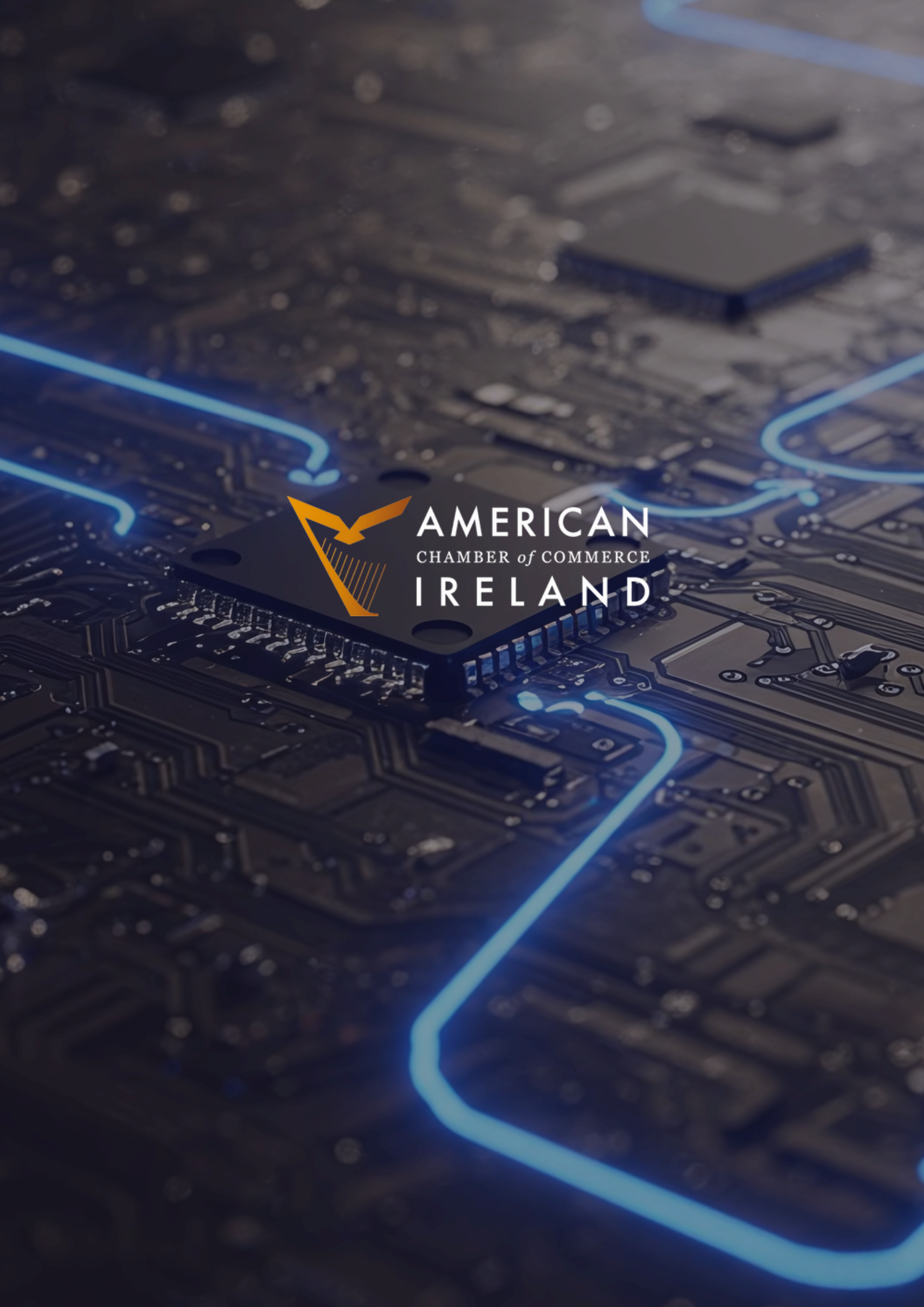
Government has selected a complex oversight model for the AI Act which is novel in nature and untested in practice. For some businesses, different AI uses will be supervised by different regulators and their ability to comply with regulation may depend on upstream model providers. Irish industry needs urgent clarification on basic questions as to how the designated regulators will work together to ensure consistent and coherent implementation of the new rules and what the regulatory costs of operating in Ireland will be. The role of the National AI Office will be crucial in this regard.

Additionally, Ireland should continue to foster the development of AI regulatory sandboxes that work with the business community to engage in the development of such regulations, ensuring that they are practicable, efficient and avoid unnecessary administrative burdens prior to introduction and implementation.

Further, a copyright framework that fosters innovation and creativity is a vital enabler for an increasingly dynamic AI ecosystem. While less permissive than the US, Japan, and Singapore, the EU's current approach strikes a reasonable middle ground by allowing AI systems to learn from varied information sources whilst safeguarding creators' rights. Current provisions, particularly text and data mining exceptions, are essential to the EU's continued competitiveness in this field.

AmCham recommends:

- That the Government champions EU simplification, ensures consistent implementation and oversight within the decentralised model and advocates for robust measures to ease the administrative burden on businesses.
- That regulators ensure the sharing of essential information within the AI value chain and promote industry good practice to support the responsible adoption of AI, including to assess risks and inform compliance.
- That Ireland leverages its position as a regulatory hub to avoid the over-regulation of the AI sector in Europe.
- That Government champions an ambitious approach to EU simplification and advocates for material changes to the EU's proposed approach to AI regulation so that European businesses and citizens benefit from this generational opportunity.
- The continued enhancement of AI sandboxes to test AI regulatory practicability prior to introduction and implementation.
- That Ireland leads thinking on how to ensure pro-competitive and proportionate regulation of the AI sector in Europe in order to support long-term decision making and investment throughout the AI value chain.
- That the Government ensures regulators account for the effect of regulation on competition, innovation and growth, and ensure transparent and consultative coordination across regulatory frameworks to maximise simplification and ease of compliance.
- That Government ensures the National AI Office has the necessary authority to coordinate and bring consistency and predictability to the decentralised model of oversight, while avoiding escalating operational costs including through regulatory fees.
- That Government should retain the existing EU framework to the copyright protection, which balances protection of rights with developing innovation, and has enabled a flourishing AI ecosystem in Europe.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