

REPRESENTATIVE BODIES IN THE AI ERA

A ROADMAP FOR LEGISLATURES



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Roadmap & Recommendations for Institutional Adoption

Artificial intelligence (AI) presents new opportunities to enhance efficiency, expertise, and engagement in legislative work. Handled judiciously, AI can equip parliaments to meet rising governance demands in the digital age, improve service to constituents, and increase policy effectiveness. This brief highlights the findings presented in POPVOX Foundation’s January 2024 report, “[Representative Bodies in the AI Era: Insights for Legislatures](#),” which recommends immediate, short-, and long-term actions legislatures should consider taking to effectively adapt to AI.

WHERE TO BEGIN

Many forms of AI have been around for decades and have been employed in legislatures around the world to improve operations and transparency. Parliamentary institutions can continue to adapt to new generations of this emerging technology in measured, strategic steps:

- ◆ Become familiar with AI technologies, their development timelines, and current use cases in legislatures around the globe. For a succinct overview of the technology and collection of US and international examples, see [Part 1 of the full report](#).
- ◆ Start now to address the institution’s “[pacing problem](#),” a term coined to describe the lag between technological advancements and the development of laws and regulations governing them.
- ◆ Pilot small experiments of AI-enabled tools augmenting low-risk tasks or operational processes in order to build knowledge.
- ◆ Develop in-house expertise by authorizing institutional technologists to attend training programs and build collaborations.
- ◆ Establish clear institution-wide guidelines for responsible AI use across the organization that can be revisited and updated as the technology evolves.
- ◆ Engage experts and the public to build legislator and staff understanding of the technology to inform policies on AI oversight.
- ◆ Ensure transparency, accountability, and human oversight in AI systems.

STEP BY STEP

Legislatures can explore implementation of the following recommendations in the immediate, short-, and long-term as institutions begin to adapt to emerging AI technologies, particularly generative AI (GenAI).

Formulate Policies for Responsible AI

- ◆ Develop ethical guidelines aligned to institutional values and clearly communicate the guidance to legislators and staff. Establish these guidelines in a manner that allows them to be revisited or adjusted in response to emerging technologies.
- ◆ Create protocols for data usage, AI testing, human oversight, and risk assessments.
- ◆ Engage the public, civil society groups, academics, and industry in policy development.

Build Institutional Knowledge

- ◆ Sponsor training programs and working groups on AI fundamentals and use cases for legislators and staff in alignment with established AI guidance.
- ◆ Start small pilot projects in low-risk areas of operations to build hands-on experience.
- ◆ Share lessons learned across teams through workshops, digital forums, and creation of a publicly accessible use case inventory list to increase awareness of pilots and best practices being undertaken across the institution.
- ◆ Consult legislative AI efforts in other governments and parliaments globally.

Prioritize Governance

- ◆ Designate responsible roles like Chief AI Officer to coordinate strategies and oversight, and increase transparency and accountability.
- ◆ Convene cross-functional teams of senior officials for AI governance to provide opportunities for individuals to voice concerns or address ambiguities. This will ensure the institution's approach to AI is workable throughout the institution.
- ◆ Implement mandatory impact assessments, use case inventories, monitoring, and reporting for AI projects.
- ◆ Establish accessible review and redress mechanisms for questionable AI outcomes.

Focus on Customization

- ◆ Resist one-size-fits-all AI solutions that inadequately address legislative needs. AI integration should not be approached as a solution in search of a problem.
- ◆ Partner with vendors to customize models using parliamentary data and workflows.
- ◆ Build in-house AI expertise tailored to legislative requirements to allow for future, customized AI-integration into legacy parliamentary IT systems and business processes.

Modernize Infrastructure

- ◆ Audit technical readiness regarding data quality, computing resources, developer tools, etc., as clean legislative data is foundational to generating high-quality performance of AI technologies in a parliamentary context.
- ◆ Upgrade IT infrastructure, digital platforms, and cybersecurity to support complex AI.
- ◆ Improve access and sharing of high-quality datasets for model development and testing.
- ◆ Invest in continuous infrastructure modernization to keep pace with evolving AI systems.

AI adoption necessitates balancing innovation, risk management, and public trust. Legislatures can pave the way through small experiments, customized tools, transparent policies, robust infrastructure, and a focus on competency building. These steps do not need to happen overnight, but with prudent implementation, AI can strengthen parliamentary productivity, expertise, and responsiveness in the years to come.

FOR MORE DETAILS

This information has been adapted from POPVOX Foundation's January 2024 report, "[Representative Bodies in the AI Era: Insights for Legislatures](#)," which can be found at popvox.org/ai-vol1.

ABOUT POPVOX FOUNDATION

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