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THE FRIDAY GOVERNANCE BRIEF

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The Machinery of Public Control

Five recent publications examine how governments oversee artificial intelligence (AI), sustain computing services and enforce integrity, with lessons for Kenya, the Global South and the wider world.

EVERY FRIDAY

Recent research, official reports and institutional analysis, examined for public decisions in Kenya, the Global South and the wider world.

THE GOVERNANCE TEST

Can the institution see, challenge and change?



See the system

Useful records of uses, authority and consequences.



Challenge its effects

Evidence, independent scrutiny and a route of appeal.



Change its course

People, review powers and continuing resources.

Governance interpretation of the five publications.

The publications in focus were published between 17 September and 1 October 2026. None featured in an earlier edition.



**GOVERNMENT AI**

WORKING PAPER · 23 SEPTEMBER 2026

Government AI is broad, shallow and uneven

Timothy Lundy, Manuel Ramos Maqueda, Shyam Jayanti Patel, Daniel Rogger, Flavia Sacco Capurro and Josefina Silva Fuentetajba · World Bank

*How Is Government Using Artificial Intelligence?***WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS**

The World Bank working paper reports responses from central digital agencies, sector ministries and information-system leads in 60 economies. More than 60% of responding governments have adopted a national AI strategy, but only about half of those with a strategy report wide use across their organisations. Nearly two-thirds report official access or licences for generative tools, against 39% with formal ministry-wide guidance. The authors find adoption broad, shallow and uneven, with data and budget constraints across income groups. These are institutional self-reports, not independently measured service outcomes; 57 digital agencies answered the questionnaire behind the whole-of-government figures, and denominators vary by question.

60

Economies in the survey

57

Digital agencies responding

39%

Formal ministry-wide guidance

PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY ACROSS THREE SETTINGS**KENYA**

The paper places Kenya among its 'integrators', above sample medians for adoption and readiness, on self-reported indices rather than audited outcomes. Ministries and counties still need inventories, named owners, data checks and measures of service performance, with usable escalation routes for devolved services.

GLOBAL SOUTH

The finding that income does not fully predict AI practice argues for capability assessments by institution and function. Sector experience, especially in tax administration, may offer more useful lessons than a single national maturity score.

WORLD

The public question is moving from whether government uses AI to whether the organisation surrounding a system can test it, supervise it and learn from error. Adoption statistics alone cannot answer that question.



**PUBLIC REGISTERS**

RESEARCH PREPRINT · 21 SEPTEMBER 2026

An inventory can reveal a system while concealing its consequences

Dipto Das and Shion Guha

*A Global Comparison of Schemas, Transparency, and Interoperability in Public-Sector AI Registers and Inventories***WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS**

The study compares 8,368 entries in national and transnational inventories covering 72 countries. Across 23 harmonised fields, registers commonly describe an application but seldom request its legal basis, risks, external evaluation or route of appeal. Wider forms often contain many blank fields, and sources covering the same jurisdictions overlap only selectively. The 8,368 records are entries in the inventories studied, not an estimate of all public AI systems in those countries. This study is a research preprint.

8,368

Inventory entries

72

Countries covered

23

Harmonised fields

PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY ACROSS THREE SETTINGS**KENYA**

Any public AI register should connect each listed use to the procuring body, responsible official, vendor, legal authority, affected service, assessment and complaint route. National and county entries need compatible definitions, so a devolved service does not disappear between separate reporting systems.

GLOBAL SOUTH

A modest register with complete, consequential fields may serve oversight better than a large template that institutions lack the capacity to maintain. Shared standards should permit comparison while preserving the context of local law and service delivery.

WORLD

A register is an accountability instrument only when its fields reveal who may act and how an affected person may challenge a decision. Counting entries is a weak substitute for testing completeness and usefulness.





ALGORITHMIC SAFEGUARDS

PEER-REVIEWED STUDY · 25 SEPTEMBER 2026

Safeguards shape what government learns to call a risk

Tynke Schepers, Floris Bex, Shirley Kempeneer and Albert Meijer · Data & Policy

More than a ritual: the recursive dynamic between governance instruments for algorithmization and algorithmic risk

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

The article codes 135 newspaper articles, 12 advisory reports and 85 parliamentary documents from the Netherlands, dated 2018 to July 2024. The authors find that readily visible procedural safeguards can attract attention at the expense of more demanding institutional change. They also identify growing attention to fundamental rights and learning among public servants. This is a study of how risks and instruments were framed in one national debate; it does not establish that a particular safeguard reduced harm in practice.

135

Newspaper articles

12

Advisory reports

85

Parliamentary documents

PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY ACROSS THREE SETTINGS

KENYA

An impact assessment should ask how an algorithm changes discretion at the counter, in the county office or in an appeal. Training, records and review powers matter when an assessment identifies a problem. Publishing a form without assigning a remedial decision leaves the underlying practice untouched.

GLOBAL SOUTH

Frameworks imported from other jurisdictions may privilege risks that are easiest to document while missing language, access and administrative exclusion. Local civil servants and affected communities should help define what counts as harm.

WORLD

Oversight bodies should periodically examine the safeguards themselves: which risks they make visible, which remain outside the form and whether officials can change a system after concerns emerge.





SOVEREIGN INFRASTRUCTURE

INSTITUTIONAL REPORT · 17 SEPTEMBER 2026

Local computing requires an institution behind the equipment

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Local AI compute infrastructure in Africa: Lessons from six country-hosted deployments on governance and effective use

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

The report draws on deployments in Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Togo and Zambia. The programme identified 21 AI applications across the six countries, a count of identified uses rather than completed services. The report follows capacity from design and procurement to installation, activation and operation, stressing data, skilled people, cyber security, governance and recurring finance. Six implementation experiences are neither a representative estimate of African computing needs nor proof that local hosting alone delivers sovereignty.

6

Country-hosted deployments

21

Identified AI applications

PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY ACROSS THREE SETTINGS

KENYA

Public investment in computing should specify who allocates access, pays recurring operating costs, protects data, maintains equipment and judges public value. National facilities need terms that make capacity usable by researchers and public institutions beyond the centre, including devolved services where appropriate.

GLOBAL SOUTH

Regional cooperation can widen access to scarce engineering capacity and specialist computing. The strongest sovereignty claim rests on durable control over use, maintenance and replacement, not only on the physical location of hardware.

WORLD

Infrastructure policy has become part of administrative design. A server can be purchased once; the authority and competence to operate it must be sustained.





Integrity rules need authority that survives the announcement

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

OECD Integrity Review of the Dominican Republic: Implementing a Strategic Vision for Public Integrity and Anti-Corruption

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

The review finds progress in creating integrity bodies and a national strategy, alongside gaps in implementation. Coordination remains largely informal; the central integrity directorate was established by decree and lacks statutory guarantees for independence. The review calls for integrity arrangements to reach municipalities and addresses conflicts of interest, audit, whistleblowing, lobbying and political finance. This is a country review, so its institutional prescriptions require judgement before use elsewhere.

A lasting mandate, credible review and capacity beyond the capital.

Governance interpretation of the country review.

PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY ACROSS THREE SETTINGS

KENYA

The practical parallel is the distance between national integrity standards and routine decisions made in ministries, agencies and counties. Clear mandates, credible internal audit, protected reporting and county-level capacity must support the rules already in force.

GLOBAL SOUTH

A new commission or strategy can establish direction, but its authority depends on legal durability, coordination and resources outside the capital. The Dominican case invites comparison, not imitation.

WORLD

Integrity is a continuing administrative system. Public trust depends on whether institutions can detect a conflict, act on it and show the result.





THE GOVERNING QUESTION

What makes control real?

Across the five readings, control has several layers. Government must know what it has deployed; record the authority and consequences of each use; possess the staff and infrastructure to intervene; and maintain integrity arrangements capable of reaching the place where decisions are made. Each layer is necessary, and none is established by a strategy document alone.

THREE REFLECTIONS FOR POLICY WORK



Where is the public inventory?

Can a responsible public body identify each consequential AI use, its legal authority, supplier, data, risk assessment and route of appeal across national and devolved services?



Who can change the system?

When evidence of error or exclusion emerges, which official has the technical access, contractual power and administrative authority to pause, repair or withdraw it?



What survives the launch?

Are the people, budgets and institutional mandates in place to operate infrastructure, refresh safeguards and enforce integrity rules after initial attention has moved elsewhere?

Public control is demonstrated in the ordinary ability to see a system, interrogate its effects and alter its course. The week's research makes that capacity a more demanding measure of governance than adoption, disclosure or ownership taken separately.





ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

Sources and evidential reach

The publications in focus were published between 17 September and 1 October 2026. None featured in an earlier edition.

How Is Government Using Artificial Intelligence?

Timothy Lundy, Manuel Ramos Maqueda, Shyam Jayanti Patel, Daniel Rogger, Flavia Sacco Capurro and Josefina Silva Fuentealba · World Bank · 23 September 2026 · Policy Research Working Paper 11466

A Global Comparison of Schemas, Transparency, and Interoperability in Public-Sector AI Registers and Inventories

Dipto Das and Shion Guha · 21 September 2026 · Research preprint

More than a ritual: the recursive dynamic between governance instruments for algorithmization and algorithmic risk

Tynke Schepers, Floris Bex, Shirley Kempeneer and Albert Meijer · Data & Policy · 25 September 2026 · Peer-reviewed research article

Local AI compute infrastructure in Africa: Lessons from six country-hosted deployments on governance and effective use

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) · 17 September 2026 · Institutional report

OECD Integrity Review of the Dominican Republic: Implementing a Strategic Vision for Public Integrity and Anti-Corruption

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) · 30 September 2026 · Public Governance Review

The research accounts report each publication's claims. The three governance lenses, interpretive graphics and concluding synthesis are independent analysis.

Survey responses do not establish service outcomes. Inventory entries are not a census of government AI. Discourse research cannot demonstrate harm reduction; six computing experiences do not represent Africa as a whole; and country integrity recommendations require judgement before transfer.

An independent publication written in a personal capacity.

