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Building India's Sovereign AI

Through Trusted Access to the US AI Stack



Access | Control | Resilience | Participation

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White Paper

Building India's Sovereign AI through Trusted Access to the US AI Stack

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Executive Summary

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming a foundational layer of the global economy, shaping productivity, scientific research, national security, public services and digital governance. Advanced AI increasingly depends on an interconnected ecosystem of semiconductors, compute, cloud infrastructure, data centres, energy, foundation models, research capabilities and specialised talent. These capabilities are concentrated across a limited number of technology ecosystems, creating opportunities for innovation while also introducing new forms of technological dependency.

This concentration has brought Sovereign AI to the centre of technology policy (Chavez, 2024). However, sovereignty cannot realistically entail complete domestic ownership of every layer of the AI value chain. Frontier AI requires substantial capital, infrastructure, expertise and globally distributed supply chains. A more practical conception of sovereignty therefore centres on strategic agency, encompassing the ability to develop critical domestic capabilities, secure reliable access to global technologies, manage dependencies and retain meaningful choices over their use.

For India, this means pursuing domestic capability-building alongside strategic integration with global AI ecosystems. The IndiaAI Mission is expanding access to compute, datasets, foundation models and AI skills while supporting indigenous and multilingual AI capabilities (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology [MeitY], 2024). However, with many frontier technologies remaining concentrated across a limited number of global ecosystems, India's strategic priority should be to build a resilient AI ecosystem that combines domestic capability, diversified access, trusted partnerships and meaningful participation in global AI development.

Trusted access to the United States and other major technology ecosystems can form an important pillar of this strategy. Existing India-US initiatives, including TRUST, provide a foundation for deeper technological cooperation (Bhandari, 2026; The White House, 2025), the next phase of the partnership should focus on enabling India to advance its sovereign AI objectives through trusted access to, and greater integration with, the US AI stack. Such an approach would allow India to leverage globally competitive capabilities in compute, chips, cloud infrastructure, models, networking and AI applications, while simultaneously strengthening domestic capabilities, resilience and strategic agency across critical layers of the AI ecosystem.

An important component of this approach is the development of sovereign inferencing capabilities, enabling India to deploy and operate advanced AI models within infrastructure that provides greater control, security and resilience over critical AI workloads. Rather than seeking to replicate every layer of the global AI stack domestically, India can leverage internationally available models, accelerators and cloud technologies while strengthening domestic compute, networking, optimisation and deployment capabilities. Such an approach would allow India to benefit from global technological advances while retaining greater strategic control over the deployment of AI systems.

This paper proposes a model of **strategic interdependence**, under which India combines domestic capability-building with trusted access to leading global AI ecosystems. Such partnerships should be structured around continuity, security, transparency, interoperability, diversification and meaningful opportunities for Indian participation. Over time, the objective should be to move from access to participation, and from participation to co-development, enabling India not only to leverage globally competitive technologies and infrastructure, but also to contribute to the technologies, standards and innovation pathways shaping the global AI ecosystem.

To operationalise this approach, the paper advances four interconnected policy priorities: establishing a Trusted AI Access Framework to ensure predictable and secure access to critical technologies; developing a Strategic Compute Architecture that combines domestic sovereign inferencing capabilities with access to global AI infrastructure; institutionalising sustained government-to-government technology dialogues, particularly between India and the United States, to address regulatory and strategic uncertainties; and creating pathways for Indian firms, researchers and institutions to participate in global AI development, technical standard-setting and co-development. Together, these measures seek to translate trusted technological access into stronger domestic capabilities, greater resilience and meaningful strategic agency.

The central proposition is that Sovereign AI is not about eliminating technological dependence, but about developing the capability to manage critical dependencies while preserving strategic choice, resilience, domestic capacity and meaningful participation in the global AI ecosystem. For India, this entails building sovereign capabilities where strategic control and resilience are essential, while leveraging trusted international partnerships, particularly access to the US AI stack, to accelerate innovation, expand technological capabilities and strengthen India's position across global AI value chains.

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1. Sovereign AI in an Interdependent World

Artificial intelligence is changing the relationship between technology and national power. Previous generations of digital technologies could often be adopted through relatively modular infrastructure and commercial procurement. Frontier AI is different. The development and deployment of advanced models require substantial computing capacity, specialised accelerators, large-scale data centres, sophisticated software, extensive datasets and access to highly concentrated pools of technical expertise.

AI sovereignty is consequently not determined by control over a single technology. It is shaped by a country's position across an interconnected technological stack comprising semiconductors, compute, cloud infrastructure, models, applications and services. A country may possess significant capability at one layer while remaining dependent on foreign actors at another. This makes conventional notions of technological self-sufficiency increasingly difficult to apply to AI.

The literature on digital sovereignty has long recognised[1] that sovereignty in the digital domain differs from conventional territorial sovereignty. Pohle and Thiel[2] describe digital sovereignty as concerning the ability of states and other actors to shape digital environments rather than simply exercising territorial control over them.

The same challenge is evident in debates on AI sovereignty. Stanford HAI[3] identifies a definitional dilemma between a strong conception based on domestic control of the full AI stack and approaches that focus on strategic autonomy and management of external dependencies. Full-stack domestic development offers the greatest degree of control but also requires substantial financial, technological and institutional resources. This distinction raises an important policy question: whether technological sovereignty is best pursued through comprehensive domestic ownership or through the ability to exercise strategic choice within an interconnected ecosystem. For countries such as India, this question is particularly relevant given the need to balance domestic capability-building with access to globally distributed AI technologies.

For India, sovereignty should therefore be understood in terms of **strategic agency**. Strategic agency does not imply that India must independently develop or own every processor, cloud platform, foundation model or software layer deployed within the country. Rather, it entails developing sufficient domestic capabilities, institutional capacity and access to diversified sources of technology and supply to enable India to make informed and consequential choices regarding technologies of strategic importance. Such agency requires the ability to assess dependencies, mitigate associated risks, maintain viable alternatives and exercise meaningful influence over the deployment and evolution of critical technologies.

This requires four interconnected capabilities[4]:

a. **Access** means reliable availability of technologies and infrastructure that are critical to India's economic, scientific and strategic priorities.

[1] Srivastava, S., & Bullock, J. (2024). *AI, global governance, and digital sovereignty* [Preprint]. arXiv. https://arxiv.org/abs/2410.17481
[2] Pohle, J., & Thiel, T. (2020). Digital sovereignty. *Internet Policy Review, 9*(4). https://doi.org/10.14763/2020.4.1532
[3] Pava, J. N., Meinhardt, C., Cryst, E., & Landay, J. A. (2026, February 17). *AI sovereignty's definitional dilemma*. Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence. https://hai.stanford.edu/news/ai-sovereigntys-definitional-dilemma
[4] Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. (2026, January 19). *Sovereignty in the age of AI: Strategic choices, structural dependencies and the long game ahead*. https://institute.global/insights/tech-and-digitalisation/sovereignty-in-the-age-of-ai-strategic-choices-structural-dependencies

b. **Control** means the ability to govern how technologies are deployed and used within India, including through security requirements, procurement and institutional oversight.

c. **Resilience** means the ability to withstand disruptions in supply, changes in commercial strategy or shifts in international policy.

d. **Participation** means the ability of Indian firms, researchers and institutions to contribute to the development of technologies, standards, infrastructure and applications that shape the global AI ecosystem.

These dimensions are mutually reinforcing. The development of domestic capabilities enhances India's bargaining position, strengthens resilience and provides viable fallback options in the event of supply or technology disruptions. International partnerships, in turn, provide access to technologies, expertise and infrastructure that may not yet be available or scalable domestically. Diversification reduces the risks associated with excessive concentration of technological dependencies, while meaningful participation ensures that India is not limited to the role of a technology consumer, but is able to contribute to the development, deployment and governance of emerging technologies. Together, these capabilities provide a framework for assessing sovereignty not merely through technological ownership, but through the extent of India's operational control, institutional preparedness and ability to respond to external disruptions.

The objective, therefore, should be neither **technological isolation nor passive integration**, but **managed interdependence**. This approach recognises that strategic autonomy can be strengthened not by eliminating interdependence, but by deliberately shaping, diversifying and governing it in ways that preserve India's strategic agency, resilience and capacity to exercise meaningful choice.

The Tony Blair Institute[5] similarly argues that full technological self-sufficiency is too costly and slow for most countries and instead frames sovereignty as agency within interdependence, supported by secure access to frontier models and compute alongside domestic fallback capabilities.

For India, this approach provides a more practical basis for defining Sovereign AI. Sovereignty should be measured not by how much of the global AI stack India owns in isolation, but by the extent to which India can maintain access, exercise control, absorb disruptions, develop alternatives and participate meaningfully in technological development.

[5] Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. (2026, January 19). *Sovereignty in the age of AI: Strategic choices, structural dependencies and the long game ahead*. https://institute.global/insights/tech-and-digitalisation/sovereignty-in-the-age-of-ai-strategic-choices-structural-dependencies

2. India's Strategic Position in the Global AI Stack

The structure of the AI value chain makes complete self-sufficiency particularly difficult. Frontier AI depends on advanced processors, specialised manufacturing capabilities, data-centre infrastructure, energy, networking, cloud platforms, software and highly skilled human capital. These capabilities are distributed across different firms and jurisdictions.

Research on compute sovereignty[6] highlights the distinction between infrastructure located within a country's territory and actual control over the underlying technology. A data centre may physically operate in India while relying on foreign-owned cloud infrastructure, foreign accelerators and international software ecosystems. Conversely, foreign-owned infrastructure operating in India need not necessarily undermine sovereignty if India has a governance framework, reliable access, diversified suppliers and credible fallback capabilities. This distinction is important because physical localisation alone does not create technological sovereignty. Sovereignty depends on the broader architecture of access and control.

The AI stack can broadly be understood across six interconnected layers: semiconductors, compute, cloud infrastructure, models, applications and services. Dependencies at one layer can create constraints at another. Advanced processors influence the availability and cost of compute. Compute availability influences model development. Cloud platforms determine how developers access compute and models. Models shape the capabilities available to applications and services. These interdependencies mean that constraints at one layer can affect the accessibility, affordability and scalability of AI capabilities across the wider ecosystem.

The concentration of these capabilities creates both economic opportunity and strategic vulnerability. Research on AI compute[7] sovereignty has highlighted the concentration of accelerator-enabled infrastructure and training-grade compute across a relatively small number of countries and providers. India's position reflects this broader global pattern of interdependence rather than an exceptional condition.

India should respond through **selective capability building**. Not every layer of the AI stack requires complete domestic ownership. Instead, India should identify capabilities where domestic capacity provides significant strategic value and concentrate investment accordingly. This requires distinguishing between areas where domestic control is essential for strategic resilience and those where reliable access through international partnerships can provide comparable benefits.

These are likely to include AI research and talent, datasets, multilingual models, semiconductor design, digital infrastructure, energy-efficient computing and application ecosystems. At the same time, India can maintain access to globally distributed capabilities through multiple commercial and institutional relationships.

The IndiaAI Mission already demonstrates elements of this approach through its simultaneous focus on domestic compute, indigenous foundation models, datasets, AI skills and partnerships with multiple technology providers.[8] This creates an important foundation for a broader Sovereign AI strategy.

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[6] Hawkins, Z. J., Lehdonvirta, V., & Wu, B. (2026). *AI compute sovereignty: Infrastructure control across territories, cloud providers, and accelerators* [Preprint]. SSRN. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5312977

[7] Hawkins, Z. J., Lehdonvirta, V., & Wu, B. (2026). *AI compute sovereignty: Infrastructure control across territories, cloud providers, and accelerators* [Preprint]. SSRN. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5312977

[8] Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. (2025). *Annual report 2024–2025*. Government of India. https://www.meity.gov.in/static/uploads/2024/12/10fcadec462c330211502fed3d24ea83.pdf

The strategic objective should therefore be to create an ecosystem in which **domestic capability and global access reinforce one another**.

3. Securing Trusted Access to Global AI Capabilities

The question of access is central to the concept of Sovereign AI, as even countries with significant domestic technological capabilities will continue to depend, to varying degrees, on technologies, infrastructure, expertise and other critical inputs developed or supplied externally. The policy objective, therefore, should not be to eliminate external dependencies, but to ensure that such dependencies do not translate into unmanaged strategic vulnerabilities.

In this context, **trusted access** should be understood as extending beyond the ability to procure or utilise a particular technology. It should encompass the **reliability, continuity, security, transparency and predictability** of access, alongside reasonable assurance that critical AI capabilities will remain available under changing technological, commercial and geopolitical circumstances. Trusted access should consequently provide countries with greater confidence in the stability of their AI ecosystems while enabling them to manage external dependencies in a manner consistent with their strategic interests.

A trusted-access framework should operate across five dimensions:[9]

a. **Contractual mechanisms** can provide greater certainty around continuity of critical services, appropriate termination provisions, service commitments, emergency access and dispute resolution.

b. **Technical mechanisms** can reduce dependence on individual providers through interoperable systems, open interfaces, workload portability, model portability and multi-cloud architectures.

c. **Governance mechanisms** can establish expectations around transparency, security, auditability, incident reporting and accountability.

d. **Infrastructure mechanisms** can create resilience through multiple providers, domestic fallback capacity, diversified hardware and geographically distributed supply chains.

e. **Diplomatic mechanisms** can complement these arrangements by enabling constructive and sustained **government-to-government (G2G) dialogue** on critical AI technologies and dependencies. Regular institutionalised conversations can provide channels for addressing emerging risks, clarifying expectations, managing disruptions and building confidence around continuity of access, particularly during periods of geopolitical or market uncertainty.

Together, these mechanisms transform access from a purely commercial relationship into a component of national technological resilience. For India, such a framework could help translate international technology partnerships into more predictable access arrangements while safeguarding domestic policy autonomy and long-term strategic interests.

[9]Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. (2026, January 19). *Sovereignty in the age of AI: Strategic choices, structural dependencies and the long game ahead*. https://institute.global/insights/tech-and-digitalisation/sovereignty-in-the-age-of-ai-strategic-choices-structural-dependencies

3.1 Sustaining Access to Frontier AI Models and Services

Foundation models represent one of the most significant points of concentration in the AI ecosystem. Frontier models require substantial compute, data, capital and specialised expertise, creating high barriers to entry. For Indian firms, researchers and public institutions, access to leading foundation models can lower barriers to experimentation, accelerate downstream innovation and enable the development of applications across sectors.

For India, the strategic priority should also be to ensure that these models can be effectively **adapted to the country's linguistic, cultural, institutional and socio-economic context**. India's linguistic diversity, including multiple languages and dialects with varying levels of available training data, creates requirements that may not be adequately addressed by models developed primarily around globally dominant languages and datasets. Similarly, cultural context, local knowledge, institutional practices and the specific requirements of Indian public services and economic sectors can materially influence the performance, relevance and reliability of AI systems. Building capabilities for **fine-tuning, localisation, evaluation and domain adaptation** can therefore be an important component of India's sovereign AI strategy.

India can leverage global foundation models while developing the capabilities, datasets, evaluation frameworks and technical expertise necessary to adapt them to Indian requirements. This approach would allow India to benefit from the pace and scale of global AI innovation while ensuring that the resulting systems are responsive to India's linguistic and socio-cultural diversity. Sustained access should also extend to the technical tools and documentation needed to evaluate, customise and integrate these models into domestic applications.

Where AI systems become important to critical economic or public infrastructure, longer-term arrangements with trusted providers could incorporate continuity provisions, appropriate security requirements and safeguards against abrupt disruption. The objective would not be to guarantee permanent dependence on a particular provider, but to ensure sufficient transition time, interoperability and alternative capacity. Diversification should remain an essential component of this model, so that India does not become dependent on a single foundation-model provider regardless of its country of origin.

3.2 Strengthening Compute and Cloud Resilience

Compute is becoming a strategic input into AI innovation and deployment. For India, the focus of sovereign AI should therefore extend beyond simply increasing domestic compute capacity tobuilding **sovereign inferencing capability**, which enable the deployment and operation of AI models on infrastructure that provides India with greater control, resilience and assurance over critical AI workloads.

Building sovereign inferencing capacity does not require India to develop or manufacture every component of the AI stack domestically. India can leverage the capabilities of the global AI ecosystem, including frontier models, accelerators, cloud technologies and other specialised infrastructure, while building domestic capacity to deploy, optimise and operate these models for Indian requirements. This approach can enable India to benefit from global technological advances while strengthening its strategic agency over how and where critical AI workloads are executed. Importantly, such capabilities should also allow India to exercise greater oversight over data processing, model deployment and the continuity of AI services in strategically sensitive sectors.

A resilient sovereign inferencing ecosystem could therefore combine:

a. **Domestic inferencing infrastructure** capable of hosting and deploying leading AI models.

b. **Access to the global AI stack**, including foundation models, accelerators, cloud platforms and specialised AI technologies.

c. **Multiple technology and infrastructure providers** to reduce concentration and vendor lock-in.

d. **Domestic data-centre and networking capacity** to support reliable and secure AI deployment.

e. **Optimisation and fine-tuning capabilities** to adapt models to Indian languages, sectors and use cases.

f. **Interoperable infrastructure** that enables workloads to move across providers and compute environments.

g. **Domestic fallback capacity** for strategically important AI workloads where continuity of access is critical.

The principle should therefore be **sovereign inferencing through strategic access to the global AI stack**. India can progressively strengthen domestic compute, networking, optimisation and deployment capabilities while maintaining trusted relationships with global technology providers. Such an approach would reduce vulnerabilities arising from excessive dependence without requiring the replacement of global technologies with domestic alternatives at every layer of the AI stack.

3.3 Advancing Semiconductor and AI Hardware Partnerships

Semiconductors occupy a particularly important position because they underpin nearly every other layer of the AI stack. Advanced AI requires specialised accelerators, high-bandwidth memory, networking technologies, packaging capabilities and supporting components.

India has made significant investments in developing a domestic semiconductor ecosystem. The objective should not, however, be to reproduce the entire global semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem immediately. Such an approach would require enormous capital and long development cycles. A more effective strategy would combine domestic capability-building with international partnerships across different parts of the semiconductor value chain. India can strengthen its position in areas such as chip design, semiconductor research, packaging, testing, specialised accelerators and energy-efficient computing while building international partnerships for access to advanced manufacturing technologies and equipment.

The India-US relationship can be important within this broader strategy. Carnegie India's analysis[10] identifies export-control alignment[11] and the economic basis of cooperation as significant issues affecting India-US semiconductor collaboration. It also identifies semiconductor design as an area where Indian and US capabilities may be complementary and suggests co-production as a potentially viable pathway for deeper cooperation. This suggests a progression from **access to co-production and eventually co-development**. Such partnerships could also facilitate technology transfer, workforce development and greater Indian participation in advanced semiconductor supply chains.

In the short term, India can benefit from predictable access to advanced technologies and equipment. In the medium term, Indian companies can participate more deeply in design, packaging, manufacturing and supply chains. Over time, the objective should be joint development in areas such as AI accelerators, chiplets, networking technologies and energy-efficient computing.

[10] Mittal, S. (2026, May 14). The unresolved challenges in U.S.–India semiconductor cooperation. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/india/posts/2026/05/the-unresolved-challenges-in-us-india-semiconductor-cooperation

[11] Bhandari, K. (2024, September). *U.S.-India tech partnership through the lens of U.S. export controls*. Carnegie India. https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2024/09/us-india-tech-partnership-through-the-lens-of-us-export-controls

This model should not be limited to one bilateral relationship. India should simultaneously deepen semiconductor relationships across multiple technology ecosystems while strengthening its domestic capabilities. The objective is to ensure that India does not merely import the hardware required for AI, but progressively develops a position within the global hardware ecosystem.

4. Diversification and Strategic Resilience

The concept of interdependence introduces an important strategic challenge. Greater integration with global technology ecosystems can increase access and accelerate innovation, but concentrated dependencies can also create vulnerabilities.

The theory of weaponised interdependence[12] demonstrates how control over highly concentrated networks can generate economic and geopolitical leverage. For India, the appropriate response should not be to eliminate interdependence, but to make it **diversified, predictable and recoverable**.

Diversification should operate across several dimensions. At the provider level, India should avoid excessive reliance on a single cloud, model, processor or infrastructure provider. At the technology level, India should encourage interoperability between different hardware and software environments. At the infrastructure level, strategically important AI workloads should have access to domestic fallback capacity. At the geographic level, India should maintain relationships with multiple technology ecosystems. At the institutional level, cooperation should extend beyond individual companies to universities, research institutions, startups and public agencies. These measures should be accompanied by periodic assessments of critical technological dependencies to identify areas where concentration poses the greatest risks to continuity and strategic autonomy.

This principle is particularly important because technological concentration can occur even when infrastructure is physically located within India. Sovereignty therefore requires attention to ownership, control, supply chains and substitutability rather than localisation alone. The objective should be to ensure that India retains the ability to switch, diversify or develop alternatives when strategic circumstances require it.

[12] Farrell, H., & Newman, A. L. (2019). Weaponized interdependence: How global economic networks shape state coercion. *International Security, 44*(1), 42–79. https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00351

5. From Technological Dependence to Strategic Participation

The long-term objective of India's sovereign AI strategy should be to move beyond access towards meaningful participation in the development of AI technologies. A country that only imports technologies remains vulnerable to changes in supply, pricing, commercial strategy and international policy. A country that contributes to technological development gains greater influence over the direction of the technology itself.

India possesses several assets that can support such participation. Its technology workforce provides a large pool of engineering talent. Its digital public infrastructure provides experience in deploying technology at population scale. Its startup ecosystem provides a strong base for application development. Its linguistic diversity creates a distinctive environment for multilingual AI. Its public-sector digital programmes provide opportunities to test AI applications across complex and heterogeneous environments.

India can therefore contribute to the global AI ecosystem in areas including:

a. **Multilingual AI**, through models, datasets and evaluation tools for Indian and other underrepresented languages.

b. **AI for emerging markets**, particularly applications designed for different infrastructure and affordability conditions.

c. **Responsible AI**, drawing on experience with large-scale digital systems and diverse populations.

d. **AI infrastructure**, including energy-efficient computing and data-centre innovation.

e. **Semiconductor design**, where Indian engineering capabilities can complement global manufacturing ecosystems.

f. **Digital public infrastructure**, where India has developed significant expertise in population-scale digital systems.

g. **AI evaluation and assurance**, including testing methodologies suited to diverse social and linguistic contexts.

This is where international partnerships can become strategically valuable. The objective should be to ensure that partnerships create opportunities for Indian researchers, firms and institutions to contribute to the development of technologies rather than simply consume finished products.

In this sense, the relationship between domestic capability and global access is dynamic. Access can provide the foundation for participation. Participation can create capabilities that strengthen domestic resilience. Those capabilities can then provide the basis for deeper co-development.

6. A Policy Framework for India's Sovereign AI Ambitions

A coherent sovereign AI strategy should bring domestic capability, international access, diversification and participation together through a structured policy framework. The following four priorities offer a practical basis for translating these principles into institutional and technological arrangements.

6.1 Establishing a Trusted AI Access Framework

India should develop mechanisms for predictable access to frontier AI models, advanced processors, cloud infrastructure and other strategically important technologies. Such arrangements could include continuity provisions, security safeguards, appropriate transparency requirements and diversification expectations. The objective should be to ensure that access to critical technologies is sufficiently reliable while preserving India's ability to transition between providers. This could be supported by clear procurement guidelines, periodic assessments of critical dependencies and contingency arrangements for strategically important AI services.

6.2 Developing a Strategic Compute Architecture

As AI systems move from experimentation to large-scale deployment, access to reliable and scalable compute will increasingly shape a country's ability to participate in the AI economy. For India, this makes compute an important component of its sovereign AI strategy. However, sovereignty need not imply building every layer of the compute and AI stack domestically. A more pragmatic approach would be to develop **sovereign inferencing capabilities** that enable India to deploy and operate advanced AI models within its own infrastructure, while drawing on globally available models, chips, cloud technologies and other components of the AI stack.

This would allow India to combine the technological scale and innovation of global AI ecosystems with greater domestic control over the deployment of AI systems, particularly for strategically important workloads. Such an architecture should also prioritise interoperability, workload portability and adequate fallback capacity to minimise disruption and dependence on individual providers.

6.3 Institutionalising Strategic Technology Dialogues with Key Partners and Governments

India should strengthen its technology diplomacy with key partners, particularly the United States, by establishing structured and sustained government-to-government dialogues on critical and emerging technologies. These engagements can provide an institutional channel to address issues that may otherwise create uncertainty in technology access and cooperation, including export controls, licensing, end-use requirements, AI safety, cybersecurity, data governance, standards, intellectual property and technology security.

A stronger India-US technology dialogue can help align strategic interests, build greater mutual confidence and provide greater predictability for technology partnerships. Such mechanisms would also enable both countries to anticipate and address emerging challenges while creating an enabling environment for deeper cooperation across AI, semiconductors, cloud infrastructure and other critical technologies. The objective should be to strengthen the institutional foundations of the India-US technology relationship so that commercial and technological interdependence is supported by sustained diplomatic engagement and greater strategic trust.

6.4 Enabling India's Participation in Global AI Development

India should seek a meaningful role in the international forums and institutional processes where emerging technologies are developed, debated and their standards are shaped. Sovereign AI should therefore encompass not only access to technologies, but also the ability to **participate in and influence the rules, standards and technical architectures that govern their development and deployment globally**.

Technology partnerships should create pathways for Indian firms, researchers, technical experts and public institutions to participate in global technology development and standard-setting processes. This could include contributions to joint research, technical standards, testing and evaluation frameworks, AI safety and assurance mechanisms, semiconductor design, Indian-language datasets, infrastructure development and talent programmes. Such participation would enable India to contribute its expertise, requirements and perspectives to the development of technologies that will increasingly shape global markets and governance frameworks.

The objective should be to move India from being primarily a **recipient and adopter of global technologies to an active participant in shaping their evolution**. Participation in the institutions and processes where technological norms and standards are debated and crystallised should therefore be treated as a strategic dimension of sovereign AI and technology diplomacy.

7. The Path Towards Strategic AI Sovereignty

India’s path towards sovereign AI lies in combining strong domestic capabilities with reliable, diversified access to global technology ecosystems. The objective should be to build resilience and strategic choice by strengthening domestic compute, models, talent, infrastructure and semiconductor capabilities while managing critical external dependencies. Trusted international partnerships, including with the United States, should expand India’s technological options without creating new forms of dependence, supported by interoperability, diversification and credible fallback capacity.

Translating this vision into practice will require a coordinated policy approach that prioritises trusted technology access, resilient compute infrastructure, sustained technology diplomacy and meaningful Indian participation in global AI development. Over time, India should move from access to participation and co-development, enabling its firms, researchers and institutions to shape the technologies, infrastructure and standards that underpin the global AI ecosystem. Sovereign AI should therefore be understood not as technological isolation or self-sufficiency, but as India’s ability to operate within global interdependence while retaining the capability, resilience and institutional capacity to exercise meaningful strategic choice.

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