



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



## Steering DPI & AI Innovation Towards Public Value Maximisation: The Role of Governments in Safeguarding Data Agency

*On the sidelines of the India AI Impact Summit 2026*

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<b>When</b>	18 February 2026, 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM IST
<b>Where</b>	India International Centre, Conference Room 2 ( <a href="#">40, Max Mueller Marg, Lodhi Gardens, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi, Delhi 110003, India</a> )
<b>What</b>	Roundtable Discussion
<b>Who</b>	Co-hosted by <a href="#">The Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</a> , <a href="#">Global Solutions Initiative</a> , <a href="#">IT for Change</a> & <a href="#">Project Liberty Institute</a>

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### Background

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) are two key domains of digitalisation over which policymakers are increasingly fixated. From a policy perspective, AI can be viewed as a [general purpose technology](#), with a wide range of possible application across critical sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, finance, etc. DPI is an umbrella term used to describe a range of technological systems (digital identity, data sharing systems, digital payments, etc.) seen as “essential capabilities for participation in society and markets as a [citizen, entrepreneur, and consumer](#) in the digital era.” Increasingly, [these two domains are coming together](#), either through ‘DPI for AI’ (data collected through DPI improving frontier AI models) or ‘AI for DPI’ (AI’s general purpose nature enhancing DPI across sectors). Yet neither AI nor DPI has intrinsic value in isolation. Their societal impact is ultimately determined by the data that fuels them, who generates it, who controls it, and who benefits from its use. Moreover, appropriate governance frameworks and safeguards are necessary to ensure digital and AI infrastructures serve the public interest and public value.

Currently, the foundational infrastructure of AI – such as large datasets, cutting-edge semiconductors and compute capabilities – [rests in the hands of corporate monopolies](#).

Scaling digital public infrastructure through these pathways has a high risk of vendor lock-in and technological dependencies, foreclosing pathways for digital sovereignty. At the same time, without appropriate safeguards, the innovation dividends generated through digital infrastructure can [entrench the interests of data capital and global tech corporations, while exacerbating issues of access, inclusion and inequality in public services delivery](#).

Additionally, the sectoral application of digital infrastructure and AI will also have to wrestle with [legacy issues and sector-specific roadblocks](#) (for eg: the unreliability of historical land records in certain jurisdictions in agriculture). Without governance frameworks that ensure democratic participation in the design, deployment and governance of digital infrastructure, the convergence of AI and digital infrastructure risks scaling efficiency without legitimacy, intelligence without accountability, and public infrastructure without public trust.

## Objective

This event on the sidelines of the India AI Impact Summit 2026 aims to grapple with precisely this question of the role of the state as an active shaper of innovation pathways for public value maximisation. Co-organised by the Government of Australia, IT for Change, Project Liberty Institute and Global Solutions Initiative, this 90 minute closed-door, intimate dialogue will explore the nuts and bolts of the institutional framework to steward AI and digital infrastructure for public value and collective well being, as well as outline policy pathways that can help realise the vision of democratic and accountable AI infrastructures. Our dialogue will focus on the following:

- How can we develop institutional frameworks that effectively balance state stewardship, private sector innovation, and citizen agency in the governance of AI and digital infrastructure — particularly given the current concentration of AI capabilities in a few corporate hands?
- How can we design, govern and deploy digital public infrastructure in a way that centers data agency and infrastructural publicness?

Through the proposed session, we aim to chart a way forward for AI development that fosters inclusivity, accountability, and the maximization of public value, transforming AI from a tool of centralization and control into a force for ethical, equitable and humane innovation.

## Agenda

15:00 - 15:30	<i>Walk-in and tea/coffee</i>
15:30 - 15:40	<b>Opening remarks from organizers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Daniel Buckley   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Australia</li><li>• Dr. Tomicah Tillemann   Project Liberty Institute</li><li>• Anita Gurumurthy   IT for Change</li></ul>
15:40 - 15:50	<b>Catalyst Presentation: Building Digital Public Infrastructure for the AI Era</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sadhana Sanjay   IT for Change</li><li>• Sarah Nicole   Project Liberty Institute</li></ul>
15:50 - 16:55	<b>Open Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can we develop institutional frameworks that effectively balance state stewardship, private sector innovation, and citizen agency in the governance of AI and digital infrastructure — particularly given the current concentration of AI capabilities in corporate hands?</li><li>• How can we design, govern and deploy digital public infrastructure in a way that centers data self-determination and infrastructural publicness?</li></ul> <p><i>Inputs from all stakeholders moderated by Anita Gurumurthy</i></p>
16:55 - 17:00	<b>Closing &amp; next steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vidisha Mishra   Global Solutions Initiative</li></ul>

## List of Participants

1. Alexander Pröll | Government of Austria
2. Alison Gillwald | Research ICT Africa
3. Ambassador Philip Thigo | Government of Kenya
4. Ambassador Ulises Canchola | Government of Mexico
5. Anita Gurumurthy | IT for Change
6. Anna Tumadóttir | Creative Commons
7. Daniel Buckley | Government of Australia
8. Dawn Nakagawa | Berggruen Institute
9. Dhanaraj Thakur | George Washington University
10. Divij Joshi | ODI Global
11. Dr. Tomica Tillmann | Project Liberty Institute
12. Henri Verdier | INRIA Foundation
13. Jai Vipra | Cornell University
14. Jeannette Gorzala | Government of Austria
15. Laura Halenius | SITRA
16. Mandvi Kulshreshta | Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung
17. Markus Reubi | Government of Switzerland
18. Dr. Munish Sharma | Government of Australia
19. Nandini Chami | IT for Change
20. Niki Iliadis | The Future Society
21. Pisal Chanty | Cambodia Academy of Digital Technology
22. Rafael Zanatta | Data Privacy Brasil
23. Ramakrishna Reddy Yekulla | Red Hat
24. Sadhana Sanjay | IT for Change
25. Sarah Nicole | Project Liberty Institute
26. Vassilis Koutsoumpas | Government of the Hellenic Republic
27. Vidisha Mishra | Global Solutions Initiative