

Press release

GSMA launches maturity roadmap as telecoms industry leads the way in the deployment of responsible AI

- The tool is designed to help telco organisations adopt and measure responsible and ethical approaches to AI as the industry looks to access an estimated \$680 billion market opportunity

17 September, London, United Kingdom 2024. – The GSMA today launches the first industry-wide Responsible AI (RAI) Maturity Roadmap to provide telecoms operators with the tools and guidance to test and assess their responsible use of the technology.

Recognising that the overall opportunity derived from the expanded use of AI within the telecoms sector is estimated by McKinsey to be as high as \$680 billion over the next 15-20 years, the GSMA is uniting the industry in using the technology ethically and responsibly – the first time a whole sector has committed to a common approach to AI.

The roadmap, developed based on insights by McKinsey and a group of operators, will allow telecoms organisations to assess where they currently stand in terms of their existing maturity in using AI responsibly against where they want to go, i.e. their ambitions and needs. It then provides clear guidance and measurement tools to help fulfil those ambitions, while ensuring industry-wide best practice in the responsible use of the technology.

Its development follows the well-established commitments of many mobile network operators (MNOs) to ensure the exploration and integration of AI within their work has been and is done in ethical and responsible ways.

Following extensive industry consultation, the GSMA has taken these approaches and combined them with existing global regulations, recommendations and standards from international organisations including the OECD, and the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI to create a roadmap for the whole industry to align on the use of RAI.

This initiative has been championed by Axiata, Deutsche Telekom, Orange, Telefónica and Telstra. Nineteen MNOs have already committed to using the roadmap as a way of tracking, maintaining and improving their responsible use of AI. Full details of all the MNOs already using it are available in the notes to editors.

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Best-practice principles

The RAI Maturity Roadmap is underpinned by five core underlying dimensions: the vision, values and strategic goals of an organisation; its operating model and how to maintain AI governance across all operations; technical controls aligned with regulatory requirements; collaboration with third-party ecosystems; as well as corporate change management and communication strategies.

For each of these dimensions, the roadmap will guide organisations to take the appropriate steps to use AI responsibly relative to their level of maturity.

It also builds on well-established best-practice principles, including: fairness; human agency and oversight; privacy and security; safety and robustness; transparency; accountability; and environmental impact.

By providing greater clarity and a common approach to the responsible use of AI, the GSMA's industry roadmap will give MNOs the confidence to commit to its adoption in the knowledge they are doing so in established, agreed and ethical ways, and therefore unlock the technology's full value more quickly.

Mats Granryd, Director General of the GSMA, said: "The transformative potential of AI has long been apparent but its integration in our work and our lives must be done in a responsible and transparent way for it to be truly effective and sustainable. This roadmap will now empower more MNOs to embrace AI in the knowledge they, in line with the whole sector, are doing so responsibly and ethically.

"Responsible AI is the right way to explore and unlock the many opportunities the technology presents, and the telecoms industry is proud to lead the way as the first sector to commit to this approach – we hope others will follow our example".

José María Álvarez-Pallete López, GSMA Board Chair and Chairman & CEO of Telefónica, said: "The speed with which AI has now become a central part of tech and telecoms operations demonstrates its power and undoubted value, but also the risks we must consider as an industry and the need to include ethics at the heart of AI to prevent its uncontrolled development. It is crucial for us all to ensure responsible guidelines for the use of AI are implemented now, and it is great to see the telecoms industry leading the way on this with the GSMA's new roadmap".

Notes to editors

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The GSMA Responsible AI Maturity Roadmap champions are Axiata, Deutsche Telekom, Orange, Telefónica and Telstra.

The full list of 19 MNOs already signed up to use it is: Axiata, BT, Deutsche Telekom, Du UEA, E&, Globe, KPN, MTN, Orange, Singtel, stc, Telefónica, Telenor, Telia, Telstra, Turkcell, TIM, True, and Vodafone.

The McKinsey Global Institute has estimated that the total impact of AI for MNOs could range from \$450 billion to \$680 billion, with midpoint at \$565 billion. Based on current scenarios, the industry is expected to fully realise this potential over the next approximately 15 to 20 years. This value was derived from the top 100 use cases that an MNO could implement.

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