sopra steria next

The Next Agenda

The **6 Pillars** of **AI Readiness**

Introducing **our expert team**

Generative AI: **From Exploration to Impact**

The Current State of AI

Welcome to The Next Agenda, from Sopra Steria Next.

This is your gateway to understanding the people, processes, and strategies driving AI forward in business. In this issue, we're excited to spotlight our expert team, whose innovation and expertise power our journey in this ever-evolving field.

Inside, you'll explore the four key business-centric AI archetypes—distinct approaches that organisations are adopting to unlock AI's full potential. We also delve into the foundational pillars of AI readiness, offering actionable insights for organisations preparing to implement AI strategically and sustainably.

We hope these stories inspire and inform as you navigate the opportunities and challenges of the AI landscape. Thank you for joining us on this journey into the future of AI in business.

Fiz Yazdi
Managing Director, Sopra Steria Next UK

Our *expert team*

Meet some of our senior leaders in AI. These experts are driving the future of AI usage for our clients.

Our team is comprised of industry-leading AI specialists with deep expertise across every facet of the field. From pioneering research to cutting-edge application, we have built a strong foundation of knowledge that keeps us at the forefront of AI innovation. Our team's extensive experience ensures that we not only understand the current landscape of AI but also play a critical role in shaping its future.

Neil Gladstone,
AI and Data Practice Director

Neil leads our UK Data and AI delivery practice, partnering with customers to deliver efficient, ethical solutions as industry and government transform their organisations through AI adoption. Throughout his career his roles have always had a focus on generating business value from technology.

"One of the biggest challanges is identifying when to use AI. AI isn't the answer to everything, so targeting those use cases where AI technology can make a real difference is key. It's about engaging with the right people in your organisation who understand the current processes, data and restrictions and working with them to identify where to focus, as well as using trained experts who can help identify quick wins and avoid painful pitfalls as early as possible."

Becky Davis,
Director, AI Consulting

Becky leads our AI Consulting practice where she leads initiatives that harness the transformative power of AI to drive innovation. She brings over 20 years of experience in business transformation to our AI projects.

"AI will reshape how we live and work in ways we have not imagined yet.

As AI matures, it will boost productivity and creativity across sectors, freeing people from repetitive tasks to focus on more meaningful work. It's not just about efficiency - it's about improving the quality of life through personalised, human-centred experiences."

Dr Kevin Macnish,
Head of Responsible AI and Governance

Kevin leads projects in governance, ethics and sustainability with a particular focus on AI. He has authored books on ethics and technology and is working on a new book, AI and Democracy. He's currently an advisor on the EU's AI Code of Practice AI Act.

"Organisations need to ensure they have both the technical understanding and the ethical foresight to adopt AI responsibly. It is tempting for some to view ethics and sustainability as restrictions on innovation, and so avoid dealing with them. However, ethical considerations in other industries have led to seatbelts, blind spot indicators and adaptive cruise control - all of which are for the best!"

Gary Craven,
Head of AI Strategy and Transformation

Gary is a Chartered Management Consultant leading the design and delivery of solutions for the AI Consulting Practice. As a client solutions partner he seeks to understand business problems to be solved and outcomes to be achieved, in order to advise on the best approaches and next-gen technologies to deliver digital and data transformation.

"The potential and impact of AI innovation is at the tipping point, which means we have a fantastic opportunity to get it right first time. Helping our customers spend their money right, to improve their employee and customer experience, produce their product/services more efficiently, and start to predict future trends so they can grow in the right direction, ethically and sustainably."

Susannah Matschke,
Head of AI Foundations

Susannah leads growth for our AI Consulting Practice. She has a proven track record in building and scaling high-performing Data and AI capabilities from the ground up. With an MSc in Data Science she has successfully steered client projects to success across a variety of industries.

"Data is often underappreciated for its importance in AI adoption. Most organisations have a legacy estate to some degree, which brings with it challenges around data quality, accessibility and the sheer volume of data that may have been collected over the years. In order to make AI adoption a success, organisations need to put in the hard work upfront to better understand and organise their data so that they can truly get value from AI, and trust the outputs they receive."

Andrew Grigg,
Head of Sustainable AI

Andrew leads our Sustainable AI work, focusing on helping organisations measure, reduce and prioritise the impact of AI. He brings knowledge and expertise from a Cambridge Institute of Sustainability Leadership accreditation. Andrew ensures the AI change we deliver to clients helps them protect the planet, improve brand reputation and mitigate risk by optimising their digital estate, transforming their supply chain and harnessing the value of ESG data for competitive advantage.

"The sustainability of AI has risen up in public and business consciousness recently but many organisations are at an early stage of knowing how to respond to these sustainability challenges. Alongside this there is an sustainability information gap between what data can be easily accessed to support business leaders in making decisions around their use of AI. AI has profound potential to both to good and harm and I'm excited about how we can make this choice easier for organisations and wider society."

Understanding the *Current State of AI*

Use

Generative AI has become established in the lives and workplaces of many people. Co-pilot, built into Windows, is widely used, and organisations are increasingly using Small Language Models to manage internal documents or run as chatbots.

Governments see AI as a means of finding efficiencies in public services. However, these need to be balanced with societal concerns around bias, privacy, transparency and how AI could impact society.

Organisations also have concerns, in managing shadow AI (employees bypassing governance to access AI) and the risk this poses to intellectual property. Some have banned all AI, risking more use of shadow AI, while others have focused on building solid governance.

Many organisations in both the private and public sector continue to be held back from realising the full benefits of AI through a lack of good quality data.

Technology

AI technology continues to develop at pace. Multimodal AI which combines images, text, speech and sound is now common. AI is also getting cheaper and easier to build. DeepSeek was released in February 2025 with a reported training cost of $5.6m (compared to comparable US-based models costing billions).

Irrespective of financial cost, AI involves a huge amount of electricity and an increasing infrastructure of data centres which need to be built. This doesn't sit easily with the NetZero ambitions of most governments and organisations.

The next stage of AI development is viewed as 'Agentic'. Rather than just talking to you, an AI Agent makes decisions for you, such as booking your holiday. To date only two AI Agents have been released: Operator (OpenAI) and Manus (Butterfly Effect). Neither has lived up to the hype, but it is still early days.

Legislation

The EU AI Act, taking effect in August 2024, has set a global standard for regulation. Its staggered implementation has seen clauses relating to prohibited AI and AI literacy coming into force from 2nd February 2025.

In stark contrast to the EU, the US administration has introduced a different set of priorities. President Trump dropped his predecessor's Executive Order for "safe, secure, and trustworthy development and use" of AI. In its place, he created a new Executive Order for "removing barriers to American leadership" in AI.

The UK is determining how best to respond to the contrasting EU and US emphases. AI use currently falls under the scope of regulators such as the ICO and Ofcom, but a consultation paper on UK regulation is expected in 2025. In the meantime, though, much is left to organisations to identify and manage the risks of AI themselves.

Summary

AI development and adoption are continuing to move forwards at pace, although concerns around environmental and societal impact remain. Regulators are trying to find the balance between spurring innovation and protecting society. In the absence of clear guidance, organisations need to manage the risks of AI themselves.

The categorisation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be split into two primary categories, based on capability and functionality.

Type 1
Based on Capabilities

Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI)

Systems designed and trained for specific tasks. They cannot autonomously perform tasks outside of this narrow domain. Otherwise known as Weak AI, this is the only type of AI that exists today.

Artificial General Intelligence (AGI)

Otherwise known as Strong AI, these AI systems are hypothetical and would possess human-like intelligence, enabling them to tackle new and unfamiliar tasks autonomously.

Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI)

A theorised future state where machines surpass human intelligence, excelling and outperforming across all domains and tasks – ranging from creativity to problem solving, and everything in between.

Type 2
Based on Functionalities

Reactive machines

Systems operating on immediate inputs and predefined rules, lacking memory, or learning capabilities – they react to current stimuli.

Limited Memory

These systems learn from past experiences and the data they store to inform and improve future decision-making. Most AI systems of today fall within this category.

Theory of Mind

These systems will be able to better understand the things they are interacting with through an ability to discern the mental states of others, including beliefs, desires, and emotions.

Self-Awareness

A hypothetical AI possessing consciousness, subject experiences, and emotions – it understands its current state.

Generative AI

From *exploration* to *impact*

2024 was a year of *acceleration* for the *generative AI* market

MONTHLY TRAFFIC ON CHATGPT

3,7B

Visits in Oct. 2024 on CHATGPT
(x2,3 v. Oct. 2023)

I.e. more than Google
3,4B
Visits in Oct. 2024

OPEN AI REVENUE

$1,6B
2023

$3,7B
2024 (x2,3) - 75% generated by subscriptions

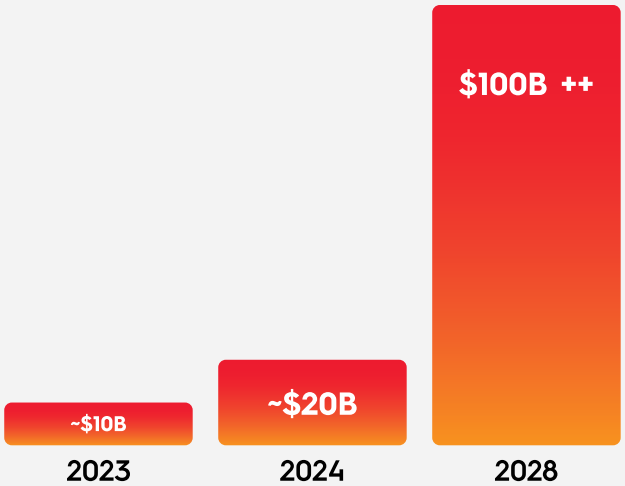
GEN AI INVESTMENTS

$34B
Q2 2023 (Amazon, Google, Meta and Microsoft)

$57B
Q2 2024 (+68%)

A rapidly *growing* market

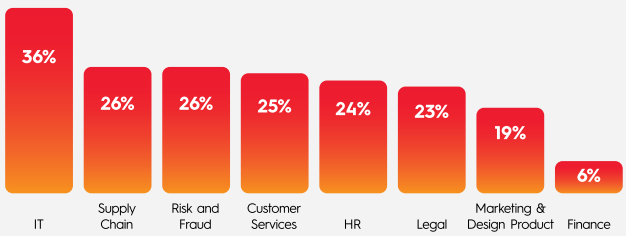
GEN AI MARKET, IN BILLIONS OF DOLLARS



However, a *slow emergence* in *businesses*

22% of big companies have deployed at least one GenAI case in 2024. VS *3%* in 2023.

THESE DEPLOYMENTS HAPPENED IN THESE SERVICES



2025 is the time to scale up *generative AI*

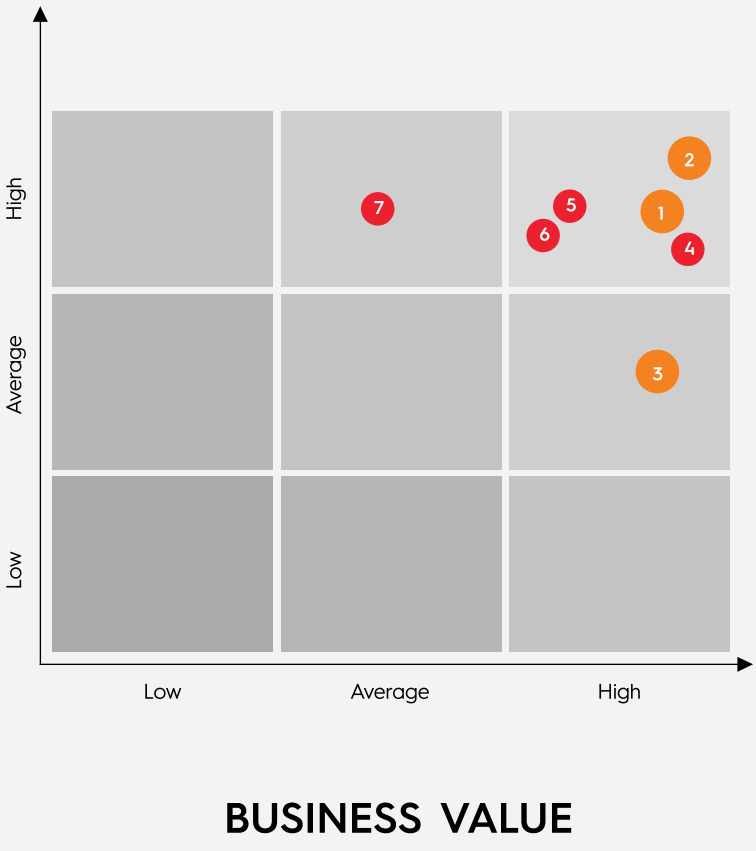
RECOMMENDATIONS BY SOPRA STERIA NEXT

1.

Focus **on tangible impact on the P&L**
i.e. applications that combine technological maturity and high added value.

+ 100 use cases
1 IT
2 Customer services
3 Risk & Fraud

50 use cases
4 Marketing
5 HR
6 Supply chain
7 Finance, legal



2.

Explore **the possibilities of** ***agentive*** **AI**

Move from "Text-to-Text" to "Speak-to-Action"
Move towards an integrated and personalised multi-task approach: "Smart Learn".

3.

Learn **to combine different** ***generative*** **AI models**

Know how to use multiple generative AI models and make them work together to optimise the:
- Cost
- Performance
- Speed
- ESG footprint quadrant

4.

Ensure ethical & responsible
AI deployment at scale

Possibility of using synthetic data to improve and simplify data management
Integrate AI regulation (AI Act)
#CSRD #RGPD #AIAct

A new approach for AI

4 business-centric archetypes

AI is often categorised by technology (e.g. machine learning vs deep learning). Yet this can be unhelpful for decision makers, who care more about the value AI will bring than how it works. Sopra Steria Next has developed an alternative approach which categorises AI by business value instead of technology. This focuses on the benefits AI brings to clients, users, employees and the company.

AI for *Machines*

MAIN USES
AI for Digital twins, predictive maintenance, incident cause analysis, autonomous vehicles...

MAIN SECTORS
- ✓ Manufacturing industry
- ✓ Transportation & mobility
- ✓ Energy and utilities

GLOBAL ANNUAL REVENUE

$180bn 2023

$330bn 2028

The industrial *metaverse*

$100bn The global industrial metaverse market in 2030

70% Product design costs reduction with the industrial metaverse by 2028

56% Reduced time to production thanks to the industrial metaverse by 2028

The *expected gains* by 2028

25-50% Improved accuracy

40% Productivity gains faced with complex problems

>50% Improved user experience

AI for *Processes*

MAIN USES
Automation of support & business processes, fraud detection

MAIN SECTORS
- ✓ Financial services
- ✓ Retail & e-commerce
- ✓ Government and public sector

GLOBAL ANNUAL REVENUE

$170bn 2023

$390bn 2028

AI for *Humans*

MAIN USES
Chatbots, content creation, knowledge management

MAIN SECTORS
- ✓ Financial services
- ✓ Health
- ✓ Telecommunications & media

GLOBAL ANNUAL REVENUE

$135bn 2023

$380bn 2028

The IRIS example
(World's first Conversational Assistant in Sign Language)

>20% Productivity

>30% Time-saving

Sopra Steria's *feedback* on *AI software* engineering

7% to 10% Cost reduction

10% to 40% Fewer bugs

2h to 10h Saved per week

AI for *Software*

MAIN USES
Test automations, helpdesks, AIOPS, assistance with code generation or correction

MAIN SECTORS
- ✓ IT services
- ✓ Software editing

GLOBAL ANNUAL REVENUE

$55bn 2023

$170bn 2028

AI market, by *Archetype*

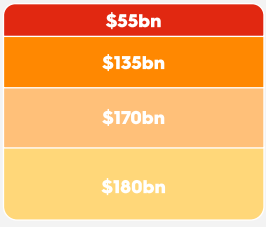
LEGENDS

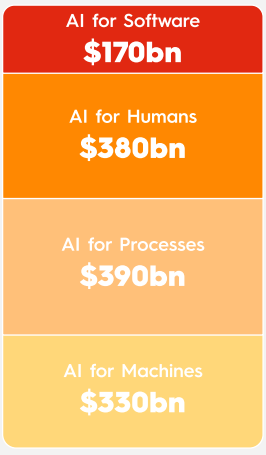
AI for **Machines**

AI for **Processes**

AI for **Humans**

AI for **Software**

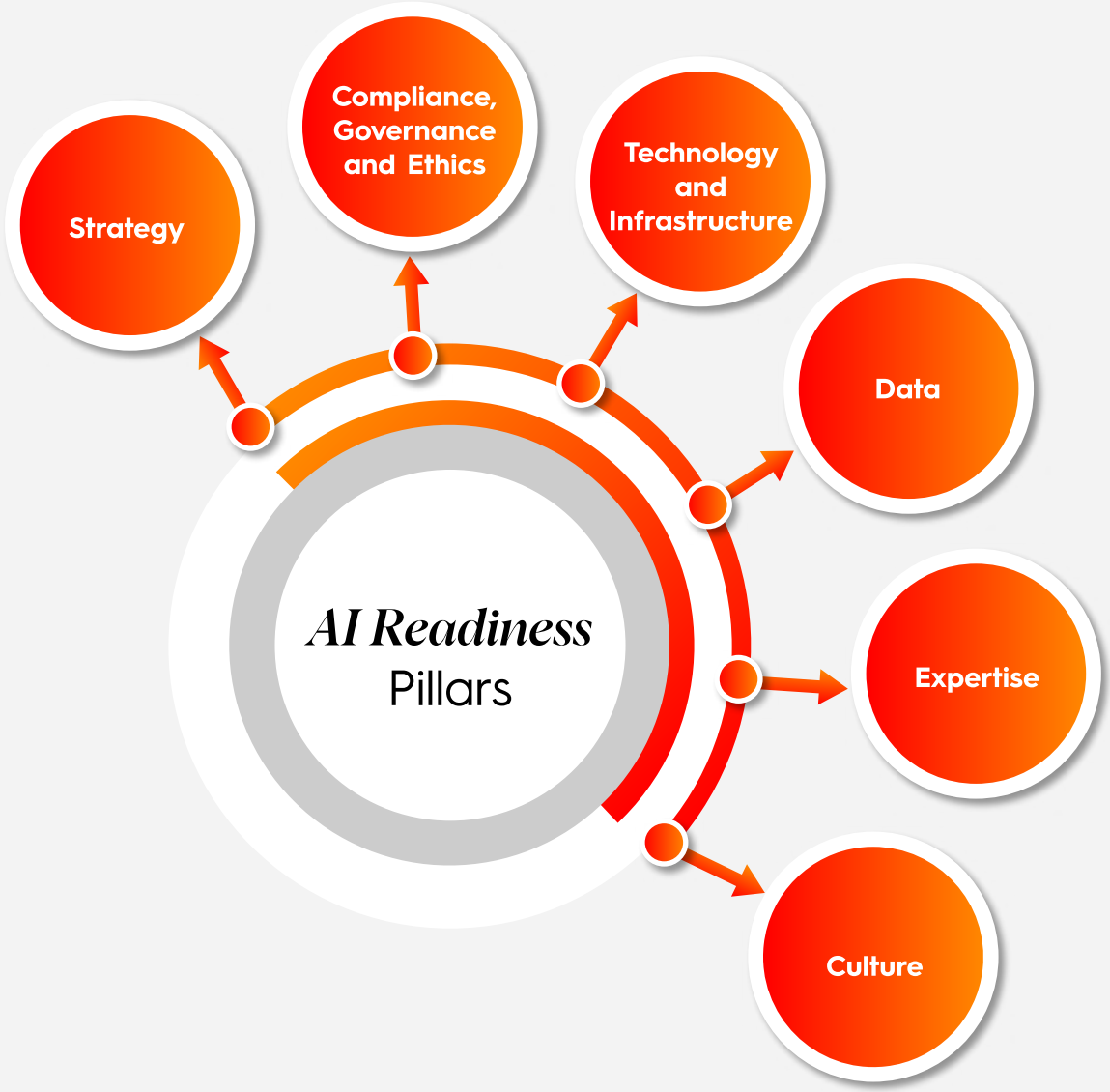




Preparing for AI: *The Six Pillars of Readiness*

Organisations must prepare to leverage the transformative potential of AI, focusing on effective integration and strategy. Early and thorough preparation is key to secure future success: organisations that invest wisely in AI now will stay competitive and innovative.

Focusing on the six pillars of Strategy, Compliance, Governance and Ethics, Technology and Infrastructure, Data, Expertise, and Culture, organisations can build a solid foundation for AI adoption. This will enable them to fully harness the power of AI, drive innovation, and achieve ethical, sustainable growth in an ever-evolving landscape.



1.

Strategy:
setting the vision

Organisations must develop a clear strategy that aligns with business goals. This includes engaging employees, ensuring transparency and fairness, and defining measurable AI objectives. A co-designed vision, roadmap for adoption, and risk mitigation plans, are all essential to maximise AI's value.

2.

Compliance, Governance and Ethics: ensuring responsible AI

With AI's power comes the responsibility for ethical use. Organisations must establish governance frameworks addressing bias, fairness, and compliance. The new UK Government has said it will introduce AI regulation in the UK, and many expect it to take inspiration from the EU AI Act, which became effective from September 2024. Ensuring AI is ethical-by-design, fosters trust and meets legal requirements.

3.

Technology and Infrastructure:
building the foundation

A solid technological foundation is essential for successful AI adoption, including cloud resources, data storage, and high-performance computing. This infrastructure must scale efficiently and align with existing systems, ensuring robust security while managing environmental impact.

4.

Data:
fuelling AI with quality data

Data is the lifeblood of AI, requiring cleanliness, management, trust, and minimal bias. Organisations must prioritise quality and governance frameworks to ensure data integrity. Consolidating diverse sources improves accuracy, enhancing self-service analytics and decision-making for better AI outcomes.

5.

Expertise:
cultivating the right target

Organisations must invest in a skilled and diverse workforce, nurturing existing talent through training and upskilling, while hiring people with specialised AI skills. A workforce that can better identify use cases, safely implement them, and advocate for AI adoption, is essential.

6.

Culture:
fostering an AI-ready mindset

To gain employees' support, leaders must promote transparency, share intentions, and highlight AI successes. Creating a secure environment which encourages experimentation and knowledge sharing, fosters innovation and accelerates AI maturity.

AI projects in action

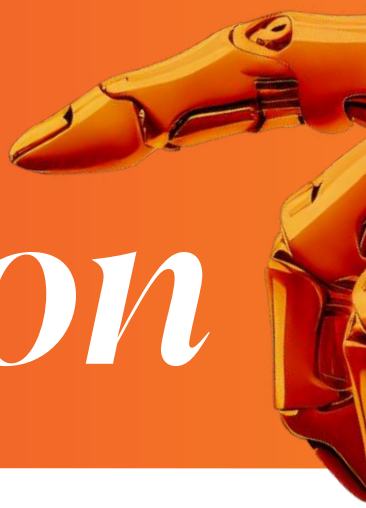
Helping Shape Scotland as an Ethical Digital Nation

Sopra Steria Next worked with the Scottish Government to shape Scotland as an Ethical Digital Nation, going beyond regulation and engaging with citizens and sectors to embed ethics and encourage innovation in AI and digital technologies. We provided Scottish Government with a prioritised action plan to measurably achieve the ambition over a three-year period. This identified existing pockets of expertise to be expanded, key levers to influence ethical change, and options to implement a National Digital Guardian, protecting citizens against digital harms. ***"Working with Sopra Steria has allowed us to create a prioritised action plan with tangible outcomes and a roadmap for a clear direction on Scotland's ambitions as an ethical digital nation"*** [Scottish Government].

Transforming Financial Intelligence with AI Search

Sopra Steria partnered with the Finance Intelligence Unit (FIU) Netherlands to enhance its data accessibility and fight financial crime by ensuring reliable, quick and accessible information when investigating unusual transactions. Sopra Steria developed "Advanced Search" - a scalable, modular and human-centred next-gen AI search solution to generate insightful answers by leveraging large language models. Adapting to user needs, Advanced Search transforms how the organisation utilises information and empowers it to combat challenges like financial crime more effectively. Our solution positions AI as an enabler for people, designs for scalability, and prepares for data quality issues with robust data governance. These strategies provide a scalable solution that transforms vast amounts of data into valuable insights.

Stay ahead in the *AI revolution*



No matter where you are in your AI journey – whether you're just starting out or scaling advanced solutions – we're here to help.

The impact of AI on business is evolving at an unprecedented pace as we enter the Agentic era. AI is moving from co-pilot to co-worker! As enterprises start to experiment and grapple with challenges of adoption, we can meet you where you are, to understand the business value agents can deliver with a focus on ethical considerations and responsible AI agentic development.

From readiness and planning, to implementation and governance, our services ensure you are prepared for what's next.

Explore how we can help you harness AI's full potential and drive real business impact.

AI Hot-House

With the AI market ever-changing, business leaders need to understand this landscape to make strategic decisions.

Spark your AI journey with our AI Hot-House workshop, which will lay the foundations for your strategic decision-making around AI and identify the most relevant opportunities for your sector, business, problems, and goals.

AI Readiness Assessment

Many organisations struggle to adopt AI, facing roadblocks like limited expertise, poor data quality, and the challenge of turning proofs of concept into real business value.

Unlock the potential of AI with our AI Readiness Assessment, where we will assess your organisation's maturity across 6 key pillars and co-create a tailored roadmap for successful AI adoption.

AI Governance

Many organisations adopting AI face challenges in managing risk, ensuring compliance, and maintaining ethical standards.

Investing in expert AI governance advice protects your business from compliance risks, builds stakeholder trust, and ensures responsible, future-proof innovation.

Sustainable AI

AI's environmental impact — across water, energy, and carbon emissions — is significant and growing, yet many businesses struggle to measure and reduce it.

Reduce the negative environmental impacts associated with AI alongside identifying AI use cases for sustainability outcomes.

Let's Build Your AI Advantage

AI is moving fast — don't get left behind. Whether you're exploring possibilities or ready to scale, our experts are here to help. Get in touch today to see how we can drive real impact for your business.

Contact us now and take the next step in your AI journey.

Becky Davis
becky.davis@soprasteria.com

The **2024 PAC INNOVATION RADAR** named us best in class in Europe across all AI services – the highest classification available – and in several specialist areas, including back-office workflows, GenAI, and digital customer engagement. Sopra Steria was also named as the top-rated provider in Europe for AI-related services for human capital management.

AI Governance Board

Our AI Governance board reviews all potential uses of AI and are empowered to prioritise ethical and sustainable considerations over profit. The board features colleagues from across the business to gain all perspectives including:

Andy Whitehurst
Chief Technology Officer

Mark Kibby
Supply Chain Security Lead

Giles Brooks-Usher
Chief Commercial and Legal Officer

Lee Royal
Procurement Director

Ruth Walkden
Legal Director

Dr Kevin Macnish
Head of Responsible AI and Governance

Juliet Norris
Director of Information
Governance and Counter Fraud

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The Next Agenda

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Driving *meaningful impact*