State of Artificial Intelligence Adoption In Africa

2024

Artificial Intelligence, AI as popularly known by everyone, is rapidly transforming industries worldwide, and Africa is no exception.

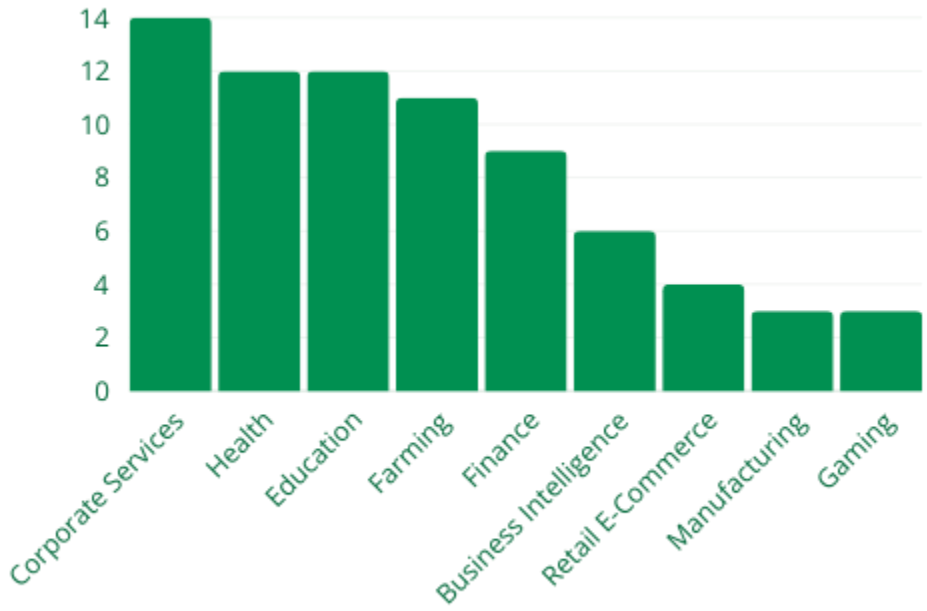
Executive Summary

Artificial Intelligence, encompassing machine learning, natural language processing, robotics, and other advanced technologies, is revolutionising the way businesses and governments operate.

In Africa, AI adoption is gaining momentum, driven by a combination of factors including mobile technology proliferation, innovative startups, and supportive policies. With growing investments, increasing tech-savvy populations, and government interest, AI adoption in Africa has seen significant milestones in recent years.

According to a report by the African Development Bank, AI has the potential to add $1.2 trillion to Africa's GDP by 2030. The number of AI startups in Africa has grown by over 70% since 2019, reflecting a growing interest in leveraging AI to address local challenges and create new opportunities.

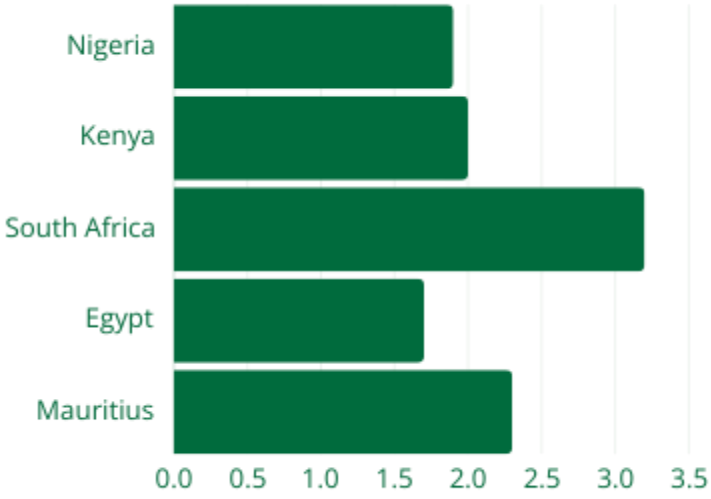
Africa is home to over 2,400 AI companies, with 40% of them founded between 2017 and now.



These organisations operates across various industries, including health, wellness, fitness, farming, law, training, and insurance.

The number of AI startups in Africa has significantly increased, particularly in tech hubs like Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, and Egypt.

These startups are leveraging AI to create innovative solutions in fintech, health tech, agritech, and more.



There are 75 million AI devices that have been used by farmers and by 2050 it is estimated that the average farm will collect 4.1 million data points per day

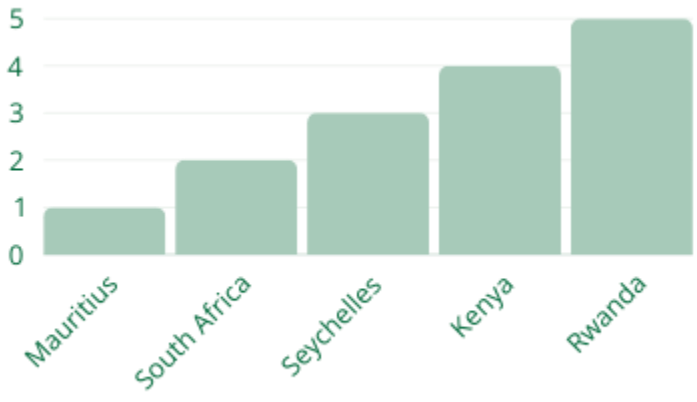
The ethical application of AI is essential. According to the ITU, only 15% of African countries have established AI-specific regulations

In recent years, the ethical implications of artificial intelligence (AI) have become a focal point of global discussions, leading to the development of frameworks and agreements to ensure responsible AI deployment.

In 2023, a significant milestone was achieved when **46 African countries** adopted the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. This agreement marks a critical step towards fostering ethical AI practices across the continent.

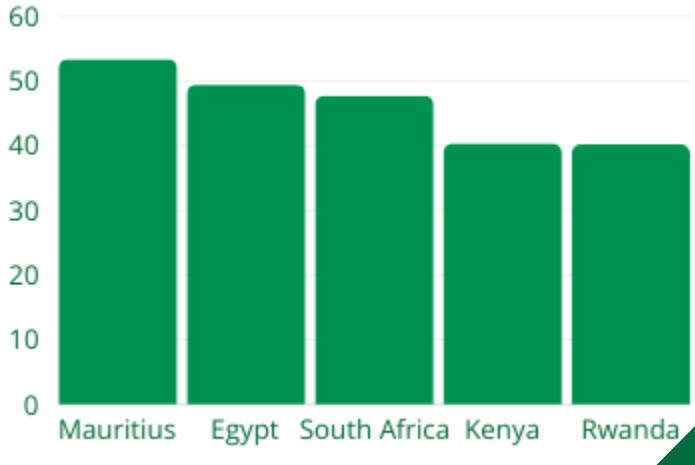
01

Top 5 African countries that adopted the global agreement on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence



02

African countries with the Highest AI adoption index



As of 2023, Africa's AI ecosystem has shown remarkable growth such as Aerobotics' $17 million for agricultural analytics among others.

Talent Development

The number of AI professionals in Africa increased by **40%** in 2023, with over 5,000 individuals now working in the field.

Universities across Africa are increasingly offering AI-focused programs. For instance, the University of Cape Town and the University of Lagos have established dedicated AI research centers.

AI Research Output

Africa's contribution to global AI research publications grew by **25%** in 2023. Leading countries include South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Egypt.

Notable research includes breakthroughs in natural language processing (NLP) for African languages, led by researchers from the **Masakhane project**.

Increased Investments

African AI startups received a record $220 million in venture capital funding, a 30% increase from the previous year. Notable investments include:

- **DataProphet (South Africa):** $30 million in Series B funding to expand its AI-driven manufacturing solutions.
- Zindi (Pan-African): $15 million to enhance its data science competition platform

However, despite these positive developments, AI adoption in Africa faces several critical challenges spanning across various areas.

Insufficient Infrastructure

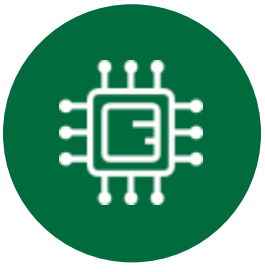
The GSMA Mobile Economy Report 2023 indicated that while 46% of the African population has access to mobile internet, significant disparities exist between urban and rural areas, affecting the equitable development of AI technologies.

Insufficient Technical Skills

The World Economic Forum (WEF) reported that only about 1% of the global AI talent pool is based in Africa, highlighting the urgent need for capacity building and training.

Insufficient Local Data

The development of AI relies heavily on vast amounts of data, which are often lacking in many African countries. According to a McKinsey report, only 28% of organizations in Africa have access to quality data, highlighting a significant gap that needs to be bridged.



Ethical and Regulatory Issues

While AI has great potential, it also presents significant ethical challenges for governments, developers and users. These include accountability, data bias, transparency, and socio-economic concerns such as social inequality.

While challenges remain, Africa is poised for rapid growth and adoption in AI applications across various sectors

With continued investment, government support, and international collaboration, AI has the potential to drive sustainable development and economic growth in Africa.

2025

According to McKinsey, AI is expected to contribute $1.2 billion to Africa's GDP, driven by advancements in key sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and finance.

2025

According to Disrupt Africa, the number of AI startups on the continent is projected to double by 2025, with increased investment and innovation driving this growth.

2030

The WEF report predicts that AI-driven solutions will create over 1 million jobs in Africa by 2030

The adoption of AI in Africa is progressing rapidly, with significant milestones achieved across various sectors.

While challenges remain, the continent's unique opportunities position it well for continued growth in AI innovation and deployment.

Strategic investments, government support, and international collaboration will be crucial in realizing the full potential of AI for Africa's development.

Solutions

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