

AI ADOPTION IN ARGENTINA: BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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INTRODUCTION

On August 19, 2025, more than 50 representatives from the public, private, and academic sectors gathered at the Universidad Torcuato Di Tella (UTDT) for the Argentine edition of the Executive Workshop “AI Adoption: Barriers and Opportunities.” The objective was to identify public policy proposals to accelerate the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions in the country and to highlight open questions to guide future work.

The initiative was organized by Amazon Web Services (AWS), Minerva Technology Policy Advisors (MINERVA), and CEPE (Centro de Políticas Públicas basadas en la Evidencia) of UTDT. This edition is part of an international series of workshops. This event, held in Argentina, was the first one situated in an academic setting, reinforcing its ambition to contribute to the national debate from a plural, evidence-driven perspective.

The opening remarks underscored two ideas framing the spirit of the meeting. First, we are at a turning point: AI is already familiar, but its full implications are still difficult to grasp. Second, turning potential into sustained adoption will require an ambitious dynamic of work and multisectoral debate, one capable of aligning incentives and identifying bottlenecks.

The workshop had federal and multisectoral representation, integrating perspectives from different jurisdictions and fields of activity, enriching both the diagnosis and the proposals.

Methodology

The day was structured in five parts: (1) presentation of the international framework for AI adoption; (2) panel on the state of AI adoption in Argentina; (3) three thematic roundtables —public sector, private sector, and workforce—; (4) presentation of the pilot Survey on AI Adoption in Argentina and Uruguay (CEPE–Fundar and Observatorio PyME); and (5) the energy challenge associated with AI expansion.

This project was made possible through the collaboration of four teams working together:

- Amazon Web Services (AWS): Martin Beyries, Marianella Sanchez Seijas, and Edward Teather
- CEPE: Mariana Barrera, Julia Pomares, Soledad Guilera, Valentina Sosa Patrignani and Carlos Annichini.
- Minerva: Kevin Allison and Venesa Rugova

About this report

This document synthesizes the main contributions from the panel and the three thematic roundtables, and presents initial trends from the survey pilot —aimed at establishing a local and periodic evidence agenda. The information is organized with an analytical and adoption-centric public policy orientation, following the logic: General Overview, Policy Recommendations, and Open Questions in each section.

WHY ADOPT AI? INTERNATIONAL LESSONS

Overview

Kevin Allison opened the workshop with a global framework positioning artificial intelligence as the latest in a line of general-purpose technologies, following the steam engine, electricity, and personal computers. These technologies transformed economies and societies not through “eureka moments,” but through the —often gradual— process of diffusion and widespread adoption. AI, he noted, represents a unique opportunity to boost national productivity and, with it, economic growth and social welfare.

Data shows that productivity gains are tangible: a 50% improvement in professional writing tasks, a 20% increase in speed and 40% in quality in consulting, or 57% greater efficiency in software development with AI assistants. However, the reality is that effective adoption remains low: only 4–5% of global companies use AI systematically, and in Latin America, rates are barely 2–3%. This creates an adoption gap between what the technology can do and what is effectively implemented in countries and sectors.

Public Policy Recommendations

The international analysis highlights that closing this gap requires a different approach than one that prioritizes only frontier research and development (R&D). An adoption-centric policy agenda is needed, which should include:

- **Applied talent:** shifting from the exclusive training of researchers to applied training programs, workforce reskilling, and the creation of “AI-adjacent” profiles. Experiences like India’s FutureSkills Prime¹ demonstrate the impact of training hundreds of thousands of workers in practical competencies.
- **Support for SMEs:** up to seven times faster, underscoring the SME adoption gap. Policies such as Singapore’s Go Digital Program² —with CTO-as-a-Service and subsidies for cloud-based AI tools— offer a replicable model to reduce entry barriers.
- **Public procurement and public sector:** the state can accelerate AI demand by applying it to key services (education, health, justice), following examples such as Estonia, which has deployed more than 130 public AI projects.
- **AI-ready data and infrastructure:** beyond computing power, it is critical to ensure reliable access to data, harmonization, cleaning/annotation, and interoperability frameworks that facilitate practical applications.
- **Fiscal policy and incentives:** many countries already adjust tax credits to reward investments in applied AI, not just frontier models.

Open Questions

- How can adoption policies be designed to reach lagging sectors and SMEs, preventing a widening technological divide?
- What formulas for training and reskilling are most effective to generate applied talent at scale?
- How can data standards and regulatory frameworks be articulated to balance protection, interoperability, and innovation?
- What role should the Argentine public sector play in driving AI demand through concrete use cases?
- How can international experiences (India, Singapore, Estonia) be adapted to Argentina and the region’s particular context?

(1): National Association of Software and Service Companies & Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. (s.f.). FutureSkills Prime: India’s technology skilling hub. <https://www.futureskillsprime.in/>

(2): Infocomm Media Development Authority. (2026, 28 de abril). SMEs Go Digital Programme. <https://www.imda.gov.sg/how-we-can-help/smes-go-digital>

STATE OF AI ADOPTION IN ARGENTINA

Overview

AI adoption in Latin America and the Caribbean shows uneven development. While Chile, Uruguay, and Brazil are advancing with consolidated programs, Argentina remains at an early stage, constrained by limited private investment, availability of specialized talent, and digital infrastructure. The emergence of ChatGPT democratized access and helped dispel the view of AI as a ‘black box’, but also raised the expectations of companies, institutions, and users. Today, the local debate is no longer whether to adopt AI, but how to do so strategically and sustainably.

Three priorities were identified for Argentina: digital literacy in the public sector and SMEs, AI-ready data governance with clear interoperability standards and protection frameworks, and the development of professional capacities adapted to generative technologies. The slow growth of specific skills and the limited incorporation of advanced profiles hinder the adoption process, widening the gap with countries already in a more mature stage.

Data presented by CEPE, Fundar, and Observatorio PyME reinforce this hypothesis. This is the first comprehensive effort to generate national-level data on AI adoption among individuals and companies. The pilot survey results, while exploratory, highlight relevant trends:

- Companies (SMEs): high interest and positive expectations, but low implementation, with no specific investments or training budgets, and a strong shortage of qualified talent.
- Individuals: incipient adoption, greater among younger people, with moderate confidence and concerns around ethics, privacy, and lack of formal training.

The survey was designed with technical rigor and international references to ensure comparability and methodological traceability, starting with a pilot and advancing toward periodic and representative measurements. Its objective is to provide local and timely data to guide the design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies and business strategies, and also to be replicated in other Latin American countries. Its launch is scheduled for October 2025 and includes a roadmap for regional scaling.

Public Policy Recommendations

1. Training and talent

- Develop a national digital literacy program that effectively reaches the public sector and SMEs.
- Implement sector-specific training tailored to industries and task types, including skills such as prompting and the creation of “technical translators” linking technical and management areas.
- Establish state subsidies and incentives for strategic careers (e.g., quantum computing) and mechanisms to facilitate talent retention.

2. Investment and enabling infrastructure

- Advance a plan for digital infrastructure investment and data governance, prioritizing interoperability, document management, and clear rules for access, use, and protection.
- Design financing mechanisms and scaled tax incentives for SMEs to reduce the gap between intention and effective adoption.

3. Evidence and monitoring

- Build periodic and representative monitoring systems, coordinated with statistical agencies and sectoral stakeholders.
- Create and develop internationally comparable indicators to measure adoption, use, and AI-related skills.
- Having comparable and timely data is a necessary condition for the design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies and business strategies on AI adoption; without this empirical foundation, decisions risk being ineffective or delayed.

Open Questions

- How can Argentina implement workforce training programs that reduce skill gaps across sectors?
- Which lessons from more advanced countries are applicable to the Argentine context, and which require adaptation?
- Which productive sectors should be prioritized to accelerate adoption and maximize economic and social impacts?
- How can personal data protection be harmonized with innovation in data use?
- Which governance models are suitable for managing knowledge generated by AI in Argentina and the region?
- How can a system of periodic surveys be sustained over time to monitor adoption trends?
- What strategies can build public trust in everyday AI adoption, preventing ethical and privacy concerns from becoming structural barriers?

PUBLIC SECTOR: MODERNIZATION & DATA GOVERNANCE

Overview

The roundtable on the public sector agreed that AI adoption in the Argentine State faces a structural deficit across all levels of government. Even though there are heterogeneous experiences in provinces and municipalities, there is a prevailing lag in institutional capacities, data interoperability, and regulatory frameworks. This technological gap limits innovation and erodes the state's ability to respond to growing social demands.

Participants highlighted three critical bottlenecks:

- Data and standards: limited data cleansing, low interoperability, and a culture of fragmentation that hinders access and cooperation.
- Capacities and talent: shortage of technical profiles in public administration and limited awareness among senior officials about the strategic value of AI.
- Digital governance: absence of clear regulatory frameworks and lack of knowledge of international standards, which hinders trust and alignment with global best practices.

Public Policy Recommendations

- Data governance policy: define clear rules for regulation, administration, and access, establishing common standards that allow data sharing securely and reliably.
- Data cleansing and creation of strategic databases: promote resolutions to generate quality, value-added data, ensuring interoperability and enabling innovation in critical areas.

- Cultural change in state management: overcome the bureaucratic logic of information silos and promote cooperation between agencies, especially in public services and security.
- Institutionalizing AI: create a specialized AI office within the State, with political centrality and operational capacity, to coordinate projects and provide strategic coherence.
- Training and public leadership: awareness programs for senior officials and interdisciplinary training of technical teams, aligned with a concrete adoption agenda.
- Talent retention: redesign incentives to prevent the brain drain to the private sector and abroad, taking as reference experiences such as Chile, which created specific instruments to preserve strategic capacities.

Open Questions

- How can government agencies be encouraged to share and standardize their data?
- Which awareness and training mechanisms are most effective for public decision-makers regarding AI?
- How can state adoption ensure ethical standards and strengthen citizen trust?
- What incentives can retain specialized talent within the State?
- How can a nationwide strategy be designed to articulate provinces and municipalities around data governance?

PRIVATE SECTOR: BARRIERS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADOPTION

Overview

In Argentina's private sector, an adoption gap is evident: while AI use is rapidly expanding among consumers, companies—particularly SMEs—struggle to incorporate the technology into their processes. The roundtable identified four main obstacles:

- Culture and awareness: low strategic understanding of AI, resistance to change, and generational gaps.
- Financing and costs: limited access to credit and own resources, especially affecting SMEs.
- Talent: shortage of professionals trained in AI development and application, considered the main bottleneck.
- Regulation and data: regulatory uncertainty and absence of a clear data protection and governance framework that generates long-term trust.

Technological infrastructure was mentioned as a structural challenge that conditions competitiveness and the ability to scale solutions. Participants agreed that no actor can advance alone: state-private sector coordination is required to guarantee financing, education, and stable regulatory frameworks to accelerate adoption.

Public Policy Recommendations

- Regulatory and AI-ready data framework: establish clear, effective, and predictable rules for data use, access, and protection, an indispensable condition to generate trust and foster private investment.

- Intermediary organizations (second-tier institutions): create intermediary entities to disseminate tools, support SMEs in identifying concrete solutions, and act as bridges for intra- and inter-sectoral adoption.
- Financing mechanisms and tax incentives: design scaled schemes—subsidies, VAT exemptions—enabling SMEs to adopt AI without relying exclusively on their own resources, reducing inequalities and boosting competitiveness.
- Applied training programs: promote training and workforce reskilling focused on specific productive sectors, aligned with the national digital skills agenda.

Open Questions

- Which specific tax incentives can drive AI adoption in SMEs and large companies?
- How can empirical data on business adoption be generated and systematized periodically and reliably?
- What role can the private sector play in promoting training programs for employees, middle management, and business owners?
- What measures are necessary to scale AI adoption across the entire economy/productive base?
- How can public-private partnerships be fostered to deploy adequate digital infrastructure?
- What innovative business models could arise from the use of open-source AI, and how can ethical standards in their implementation be ensured?

WORKFORCE & SKILLS FOR AI ADOPTION

Overview

The roundtable on skills emphasized that AI adoption in Argentina will only be sustainable if it is conceived as a complement to human work, enhancing productivity rather than replacing jobs. This requires a comprehensive strategy for training, governance, and talent retention.

Participants agreed on four critical axes:

- Differentiated training: different training levels depending on role and sector, from general competencies to advanced training for strategic profiles.
- Cross-cutting skills and new profiles: communication, critical thinking, and the ability to “translate” technical problems; need to foster “technical translator” profiles and train in prompting as a key competence.
- Education and digital culture: early incorporation of adoption-centric skills in schools and universities’ curricula, focused on information validation, critical thinking, and understanding of AI’s limits and scope.
- Talent retention and data governance: professionals leaving for the private sector and abroad; need to define clear frameworks for data ownership, sharing, and use to sustain trust.
- Adoption-centric skills taxonomy: develop a framework linking audiences, technologies, and organizational objectives as a guide for training programs.
- Talent retention incentives: specific mechanisms in the public and private sectors to prevent the immediate loss of trained workers.
- Promotion of bridge profiles: stimulus programs for the promotion of adoption-adjacent ‘technical translator’ roles to connect technical and policy domains.
- Early AI education: inclusion of content in schools and universities, with a focus on information validation and critical thinking.
- Organizational processes aligned with AI: redesign work practices to maximize the value generated by the technology.

Open Questions

- How can workers and employers be encouraged to actively participate in AI training processes?
- What policies can balance the need for more technical training with the risk of talent loss?
- Which actors should take responsibility for designing and delivering AI training programs?
- How can data governance strengthen citizen and business trust?
- How can critical AI teaching be integrated at different educational levels without displacing the value of academic knowledge?

Public Policy Recommendations

- Differentiated training: ensure a baseline of AI knowledge for the entire workforce and advanced training for critical profiles.

CONCLUSION

The workshop left a shared diagnosis: Argentina faces an AI adoption gap that requires an adoption-centric policy agenda that scales out-of-the-box use cases in the public sector, the private sector, and the workforce. The day revealed an explicit willingness for cooperation among public, business, and academic actors to move in that direction. At the same time, it was recognized that the scalability of adoption depends on enabling conditions — particularly compute, software, data and energy infrastructure— capable of accompanying the pace of use case deployment.

In the public sector, consensus concentrated on three critical bottlenecks: data and standards (interoperability, quality, and responsible access), capacities and talent (awareness among decision-makers and technical teams), and digital governance (clear and predictable frameworks). The priority is to establish a data governance policy and define roadmaps by agency to guide impactful service use cases.

In the private sector, attention focused on culture and change management, costs and financing, applied talent, and regulatory trust around data. It was proposed to advance intermediary instances for SMEs, financing mechanisms and incentives to reduce adoption costs, and training programs directly linked to productive processes.

In the workforce and skills dimension, differentiated training was proposed (a minimum threshold for all and advanced tracks for strategic profiles), the promotion of bridge profiles (“technical translators”), early education with critical thinking, and talent retention mechanisms. These measures must be accompanied by organizational changes that maximize AI’s value in daily work.

The workshop also established a local evidence agenda: the pilot Survey on AI Adoption in Argentina and Uruguay (CEPE–Fundar, with support from Observatorio PyME for company data) was presented, the first step toward a system of periodic and comparable data to guide public and private decisions. Participants agreed that accelerating adoption will require combining enabling data frameworks, financing, and applied skills, and that continuous measurement will allow policy adjustments and scaling of what works.

Finally, the need and willingness emerged to sustain a federal and multisectoral dialogue that continues removing barriers, institutionalizing data governance, and ensuring enabling conditions —with emphasis on digital and energy infrastructure— so that adoption is rapid, responsible, and sustainable.

