

# Guideline for National Governments/Ministries: Fostering AI Literacy through Informal Learning & Open Education - Lessons from the AI4Gov Project

## Introduction

The rapid evolution of Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents both immense opportunities and complex challenges for public governance. Traditional education systems often struggle to keep pace with this dynamic landscape, creating a critical need for accessible, adaptable, and continuous learning pathways. This short guideline outlines a strategy for national governments and ministries to cultivate AI literacy within their workforces and beyond, leveraging the power of informal learning and open education, drawing from the experiences and best practices of the European project AI4Gov – Trusted AI for Transparent Public Governance, fostering Democratic Values (<https://ai4gov-project.eu/>).

## 1. The Importance of AI Literacy in Public Governance

AI is no longer a future concept; it is interwoven into the fabric of modern society and increasingly impacting public service delivery. A workforce equipped with AI literacy – encompassing foundational understanding of AI principles, ethical considerations, potential biases, and governance frameworks – is essential for:

- **Informed Policy Making:** Developing effective regulations and policies that harness AI's benefits while mitigating risks.
- **Responsible Implementation:** Deploying AI systems ethically, transparently, and accountably within public services.
- **Enhanced Service Delivery:** Optimizing processes, improving citizen experiences, and fostering innovation.
- **Digital Transformation:** Leading and navigating the broader digital transformation of the public sector.
- **Public Trust:** Building confidence in AI-driven systems and processes.

## 2. Leveraging Informal Learning & Open Education

Traditional formal education is vital, but insufficient on its own. Informal learning and open education offer flexible and scalable solutions for addressing the AI literacy gap:

- **Accessibility:** Open education resources (OER) remove barriers to learning, allowing access for diverse audiences and skill levels.
- **Flexibility:** Learning can occur at the learner's own pace and schedule, accommodating busy professionals.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** OER significantly reduce training costs for governments and organizations.
- **Continuous Learning:** Provides opportunities for ongoing upskilling and adaptation to evolving AI technologies.
- **Collaboration & Knowledge Sharing:** Facilitates a community of practice, fostering shared learning and best practices.

### 3. The AI4Gov Approach: A Case Study from Slovenia

The AI4Gov project has demonstrated a successful model for fostering AI literacy through a targeted approach emphasizing open education and stakeholder engagement. Jožef Stefan Institute (JSI) in Slovenia has been instrumental in driving this initiative.

#### 3.1 Developing the Learning Collection: “Trustworthy and Democratic AI”

AI4Gov developed a comprehensive e-learning collection hosted on the Open University’s OpenLearn Create platform:

- **Content:** 5 e-learning courses totalling over 100 hours of learning materials.
- **Levels:** 3 beginner courses (English, Spanish, Slovene) and 2 intermediate courses (English).
- **Accessibility:** Fully open access, available with or without registration. Registered users benefit from progress tracking, digital badges, and certificates of attendance.
- **Topics:** Fundamentals of AI, bias in AI, ethical considerations, governance frameworks, and responsible AI development.
- **Learning Formats:** Text, video lectures, presentation slides, comic books, quizzes.
- Link to the collection:  
<https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/index.php?categoryid=2051>.

#### 3.2 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy: A Step-by-Step Approach

JSI's success in Slovenia was rooted in a proactive and iterative engagement strategy:

1. **Initial Outreach & Needs Assessment:** Directly engage with relevant ministries and policy makers (e.g., Ministry for Digital Transformation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry for Public Administration). Initiate dialogue to understand existing AI knowledge and identify learning needs. Workshops and informal meetings are crucial for building relationships and trust.
2. **Targeted Training Workshops:** Organize workshops focused on foundational AI concepts, regulation, and ethical considerations. Film and openly publish these sessions (e.g., on VideoLectures.NET – [https://videolectures.net/events/AI4GOVtraining2023\\_ljubljana](https://videolectures.net/events/AI4GOVtraining2023_ljubljana) and AI4GOV YouTube channel) to broaden reach.
3. **Collect Feedback & Prioritize Learning Materials:** Actively solicit feedback from stakeholders on workshop content and emerging learning needs. This feedback informed the development of the e-learning collection.
4. **Translate & Localize Learning Materials:** Recognizing the importance of language accessibility, JSI translated the core “Trustworthy and Democratic AI” course into Slovene.
5. **Partnership with Education Units:** Collaborate with ministries that manage employee training and development (e.g., Ministry of Public Administration in Slovenia). Integrate AI literacy materials into existing curricula and mandatory training programs.
6. **Co-Development of Specialized Training:** Respond to stakeholder requests by co-developing specialized training programs tailored to specific needs (e.g., 3 x 3-hour online trainings for the Slovenian public sector in 2025-2026 on ethical challenges, legal aspects, and intellectual property).
7. **Long-Term Vision:** Extend learning opportunities beyond the public sector to encompass the business community, fostering broader AI literacy across the nation.

#### 4. Key Recommendations for National Governments/Ministries







- **Invest in Open Education Resources:** Support the development and translation of high-quality, openly accessible AI literacy materials.
- **Prioritize Stakeholder Engagement:** Build strong relationships with relevant ministries and policy makers through regular dialogue and collaborative workshops.
- **Tailor Learning Pathways:** Develop specialized training programs that address the specific needs of different government departments and roles.
- **Integrate AI Literacy into Existing Curricula:** Incorporate AI literacy materials into existing training programs and professional development pathways.
- **Foster a Community of Practice:** Create platforms for knowledge sharing and collaboration among AI literacy learners.
- **Track Progress and Evaluate Impact:** Monitor the uptake of AI literacy materials and assess their impact on policy making, service delivery, and public trust.
- **Embrace a Long-Term Vision:** Recognize that AI literacy is a continuous journey and invest in ongoing learning and development opportunities.

#### Conclusion

Fostering AI literacy is a critical imperative for national governments and ministries. By embracing informal learning, open education, and a collaborative stakeholder engagement strategy, governments can empower their workforces to navigate the opportunities and challenges of the AI era and build a more trustworthy and democratic future. The AI4Gov project, and specifically the experiences of JSI in Slovenia, provides a valuable roadmap for achieving this vision.

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*\*AI language models (Microsoft Copilot, based on GPT-5) were used to ensure language accuracy and clarity.*

<b>AI4Gov learning collection: “Trustworthy and democratic AI”</b> (QR code for the whole collection) 					
No.	Title	Info	Duration	Public on OpenLearn Create	QR code
E-learning course 1	Trustworthy and democratic AI – Fundamentals	Beginner level, in English	15 hours	from April 2024	
E-learning course 2	Inteligencia Artificial fiable y democrática - Fundamentos	Beginner level, in Spanish	15 hours	From February 2025	
E-learning course 3	Zaupanja vredna in demokratična umetna inteligenca – osnove	Beginner level, in Slovenian	15 hours	From February 2025	
E-learning course 4	Trustworthy and democratic AI - creating awareness and change	Intermediate, in English	50 hours	From April 2025	
E-learning course 5	Trustworthy and Democratic AI – responsible AI development	Intermediate, in English	10 hours	From July 2025	
Sum: 5 learning courses (100+ hours)					