AUTORITEIT
PERSOONSGEGEVENS

Get started with AI Literacy

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AI SYSTEMS AT ORGANISATIONS

FEBRUARY 2025

Society is increasingly confronted with the influence of algorithms and AI. This affects people in their various roles, for example as a citizen, employee, student or consumer. Promoting AI literacy is essential for strengthening societal resilience when dealing with algorithms and AI. Additionally, AI literacy enables citizens to navigate society with confidence and critical reflection. It supports organisations in the responsible deployment of AI systems and provides policy makers and politicians the basic knowledge to make strategic choices. Achieving a mature level of AI literacy requires a structural and tailor-made approach, which takes into account the context and roles in which people interact with AI systems. Organisations that provide and deploy AI systems hold an important part of the responsibility for achieving this. The AI Act lists a number of factors that should be taken into account when developing AI literacy. However, these factors need to be further developed in order to provide sufficient guidance. In this document, the AP offers guidance to develop a multiannual action plan to promote AI literacy within organisations.

About this document

As coordinating supervisor of algorithms and AI, the AP contributes to - the preparation of - supervision of the AI Act. The AP also makes an effort to give substance to the responsible use of algorithms and AI. In this document, the AP addresses AI literacy as a building block for the governance of AI systems. In this context, AI literacy is also desirable for certain algorithmic processes that do not classify as AI systems. In the context of AI regulation, policies, best practices, and guidelines on AI literacy are still evolving. This document on AI literacy is also an annex in the fourth Report on AI & Algorithm Risks Netherlands (February 2025).

The AP calls for a strategic and long-term approach to AI literacy. This helps ensure human control so that AI systems are used responsibly. This requires knowledge on the functioning, possible risks and opportunities of AI systems. However, not everyone is required to have the same knowledge. For example, it is essential for policymakers, politicians and regulators to possess a substantive level of AI knowledge in order to be able to make the right policy choices. For citizens and consumers, a basic understanding about how AI works is desirable or even necessary, especially when AI systems play a role in decision-making that may have an impact on them.

Providers and deployers of AI systems have to take measures to ensure AI literacy by 2 February 2025.[1] These organisations shall guarantee a sufficient level of AI literacy among staff and other persons using AI systems on their behalf. AI literacy means that staff and affected persons have the right skills, knowledge and understanding to deploy AI systems responsibly. This helps organisations to mitigate risks of AI and to leverage opportunities.

What measures should an organisation take regarding AI literacy?

There is no one size fits all-set of measures to ensure an adequate level of AI literacy. When it comes to the adequate governance of AI systems, it is important to take into account the context and area of deployment. This directly affects the required knowledge of the people involved. Furthermore, AI literacy is not only about the technical aspect of AI systems, but also the accompanying societal, ethical and practical aspects. For example, it is important that employees understand how to interpret the output of an AI system. Additionally, employees should understand how decisions that are taken with the use or aid of an AI-system impacts those concerned. Which specific measures organisations need to take in order to ensure AI literacy, is not prescribed by law. Therefore, meeting this obligation demands a high level of maturity and creativity on the part of organisations.

What factors should an organisation take into account?

The degree of risks, persons involved and context of AI systems have an impact on the measures to be taken in order to promote AI literacy. The available resources of an organisation also play an important role in this respect. The higher the level of risk of an AI system, the more is required of employees in terms of AI literacy. Additionally, the content and level of knowledge, skills and understanding will also depend on the position of the employee within an organisation. Furthermore, the context in which the AI system is deployed also determines the required level of AI literacy, which can even differ within organisations. The required measures also depend on the possibilities, financial or otherwise, that organisations have. In this regard, large corporations are likely to have more available resources than small and medium-sized organisations.

Multiannual Action Plan for AI literacy

Developing and deploying a multiannual action plan within organisations can help to achieve a high level of AI literacy maturity. The Graph provides an overview of focus areas within such a multiannual action plan. This allows organisations to determine the current level of AI literacy within the organisation in four steps and improve it accordingly. This overview is not an exhaustive list or a checklist, but it equips organisations with a preliminary framework to take action on AI literacy.

This requires managerial commitment. For the implementation of a multiannual action plan on AI literacy, it is important to (i) establish a plan at management level, (ii) provide sufficient budget, (iii) establish organisational and ownership responsibility, and (iv) institute periodic progress and accountability assessments.

Step 1

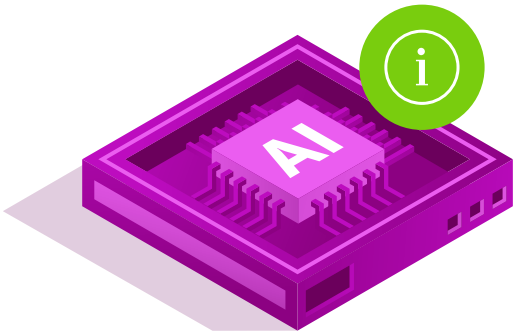
Identification

Map AI systems to obtain a full overview of AI systems within the organisation. The first step is to know which AI systems are used within an organisation and to gain insight into the associated risks and opportunities. In this regard, focus on the effects that an AI system can have on people and society. The records of processing activities can be helpful as a starting point. In addition, map what policy documents, vision documents and measures already exist with relevance for AI literacy.

Example: Identification

Project manager Sandra must ensure that all AI systems within company Y are known and registered. At present there is no internal overview available. When registering the systems, Sandra also assesses the risk level of the AI systems. What are the possible effects of deploying these systems? She makes sure she takes into account which employees are involved and their role regarding the system.

Identify the involved persons within the organisation and their respective roles, and collect the necessary documentation. A baseline measurement of the general knowledge and skills of employees helps to determine specific goals. The knowledge and skills can involve technical, social, ethical and practical aspects. To measure this, a survey or interviews could be used to assess the current level of knowledge of the employees throughout the organisation. The results thereof help to map out the level of knowledge at the start. Moreover, they provide a good benchmark against which the development of AI literacy can be assessed in the evaluation phase.



Step 2

Goal setting

Determine AI literacy goals and priorities based on the level of risk. Employees working with AI systems must have sufficient knowledge about the risks and outcomes. Therefore, for each employee involved, determine which knowledge and tools are necessary to achieve an adequate level of AI literacy and to be able to use the AI system responsibly.

Example: Goal setting

A lecturer at the university uses generative AI to prepare teaching materials. In this case, it is important that the teacher understands how the information came into being and realizes that an AI system can contain biases and incorrect information.

The university's HR staff also need to have sufficient knowledge about AI systems as the university uses a profiling assessment for the admission of new students to a prestigious programme. This can have far-reaching consequences for the people that apply. HR staff therefore needs to possess the necessary knowledge about the potential risks and how to properly use such an AI system.

The example shows that knowledge and skills differ per employee within an organisation, and that the context and risk of the system play a part in this. Not everyone needs to know an equal amount about certain AI systems. The employees working with these systems should have sufficient knowledge to know what the risks are and how the AI system works. Other employees, who do not work with these systems, do not need to know the exact functioning, but they should be aware that AI systems are being deployed and why. In this manner, employees can take their responsibility within their respective positions. For example, as a director, manager, complaint handler, controller or communication advisor.

Step 3

Implementation

After setting goals follows the determination of strategies and actions. For example this can include creating awareness through training that examines ethical, technical and legal aspects of AI systems. Another possibility is to offer specialization training for employees who actively work with, procure or make decisions regarding AI systems.

AI literacy should be high on the agenda at all levels within the organisation. Furthermore, organisations can keep track of developments in order to gain insight into the learning curve and the taken steps. In order to optimise and structure these processes, organisations – especially large ones – can concretise and assign these responsibilities as specific roles within the organisation. Appointing an employee (AI officer), organisations can prevent that the implementation of AI literacy doesn't get overlooked.

Example: Implementation

In order to ensure awareness of AI literacy, organisation Y creates a vision/culture document: 'How do we deal with AI?' This document should be integrated within all departments.

Step 4

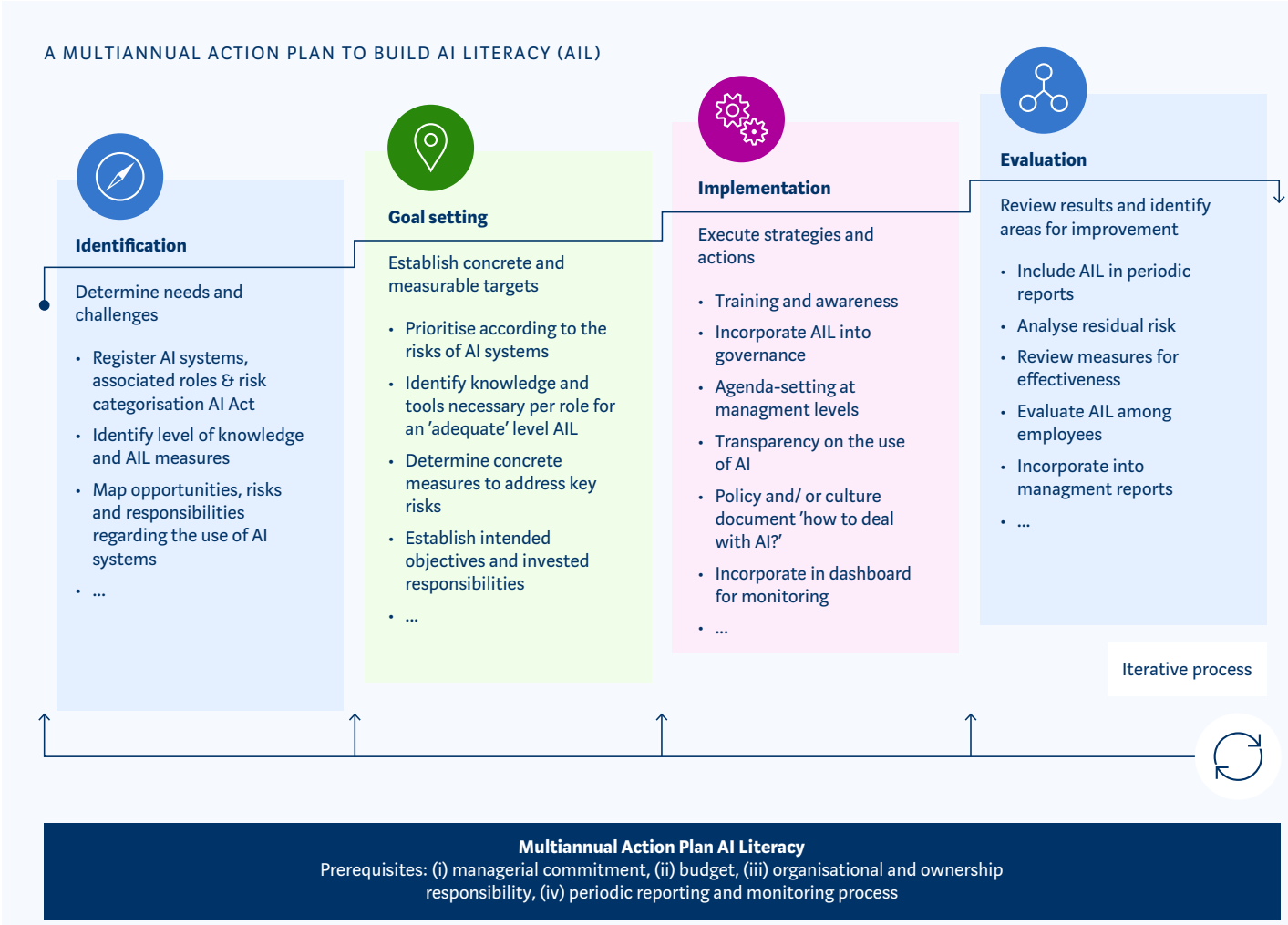
Evaluation

Analyse regularly whether the targets are being met. For example, by use of periodic reports, internal or external audits, or baseline measurements. With tangible results, organisations can set new goals and devise measures to attain a sufficiently mature level of AI literacy and maintain it.

Example: Evaluation

By conducting an annual employee survey, company Y can investigate whether the measures taken contribute to the skills necessary for the various roles in the organisation.

AI literacy is not an end goal but a constant process. The developments and applications of AI are moving fast, which creates new opportunities and risks that may not yet be recognized. Organisations will increasingly use AI to leverage these opportunities. It is therefore important to continue to work on AI literacy, in order to keep up with these developments and to mitigate risks as much as possible.



AI literacy and the role of supervisors

AI literacy serves a preventive purpose and contributes to compliance with laws and regulations, such as the AI Act. As a coordinating supervisor on algorithms and AI, the AP identifies the importance of raising awareness on AI literacy within organisations. Therefore, in the coming period the AP will collect and share knowledge on AI literacy, for example in the form of good practices and by organizing meetings. The main message will be that organisations need to be proactive in prioritizing AI literacy.

[1] Article 4 of the AI Act (2024/1689): 'Providers and deployers of AI systems shall take measures to ensure, to their best extent, a sufficient level of AI literacy of their staff and other persons dealing with the operation and use of AI systems on their behalf, taking into account their technical knowledge, experience, education and training and the context the AI systems are to be used in, and considering the persons or groups of persons on whom the AI systems are to be used.'