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ADVISORY BOARD ROUNDTABLE

SESSION 5

RECOMMENDATIONS on How National AI Infrastructure and Compute Enable Scalable Adoption Across Key Sectors

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“Expanding access to compute is the single biggest enabler of AI adoption because breakthrough ideas only become enterprise-scale innovation when organizations have affordable infrastructure available on demand.”

Omar AlSheikh
Country Head & Senior Director, KSA & Bahrain- Energy, Services & Government, Infosys



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Access to Compute Infrastructure will Determine AI Competitiveness

Omar AlSheikh
Country Head and Senior Director, KSA & Bahrain- Energy, Services & Government, Infosys

Artificial intelligence will not scale through ambition alone. It requires one essential resource that has quickly become the defining constraint on AI adoption: access to compute. While organizations continue to develop innovative AI solutions, many remain unable to move beyond pilot projects because they lack affordable and scalable computing infrastructure.

For this reason, I believe the highest priority is expanding access to compute across the ecosystem. Compute is no longer simply a technology resource—it is becoming a strategic national asset that will determine how successfully countries compete in the AI economy. Widening access allows startups, universities, research institutions and enterprises of every size to participate in innovation rather than concentrating AI capabilities within a small number of large organizations.

Greater accessibility also accelerates transformation across critical sectors including energy, healthcare, financial services and government. When computing resources are available at scale and on demand, organizations can deploy AI more rapidly, improve productivity and create measurable business value. Democratizing access therefore strengthens both enterprise performance and national competitiveness.

National AI strategies should embed accessibility as a core design principle rather than treating it as a secondary consideration. Infrastructure investments must be accompanied by policies that ensure organizations across the economy can benefit from them. The nations that succeed in the AI era will not necessarily be those with the greatest computing capacity, but those that make compute broadly accessible, enabling innovation, economic growth and scalable AI adoption across every sector. ■

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“National AI infrastructure only creates value when organizations can access compute affordably, securely, and at scale, transforming capacity into meaningful adoption across every sector of the economy.”

Hany Azzam
Customer Success Lead, Microsoft Saudi Arabia



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Expand Access Before Expanding Capacity
Hany Azzam
Customer Success Lead, Microsoft Saudi Arabia

If artificial intelligence is to become a true engine of economic growth, expanding access to compute must become a national priority. While discussions around AI infrastructure often focus on the number of data centres, GPUs and computing capacity being deployed, infrastructure alone does not create value. Its value is realized only when organizations across the economy can access, adopt and use it effectively.

For this reason, I believe the most important recommendation is expanding access to compute across the ecosystem. National AI strategies and public-private partnerships are essential for building supply, but access is what transforms infrastructure into enterprise adoption. Startups, hospitals, universities and government agencies all need affordable, secure access to computing resources if AI is to deliver widespread economic impact rather than isolated success stories.

Success should not be measured by the amount of infrastructure deployed, but by the outcomes it enables. Higher adoption rates, greater productivity, enterprise transformation and measurable economic gains are stronger indicators of progress than compute capacity alone. Underutilized infrastructure represents stranded investment, not innovation.

However, access alone is insufficient. Nations must also invest in the people capable of using AI effectively. Developers, security specialists, business leaders and change management professionals all play critical roles in translating infrastructure into business value. Compute and capability must grow together. Only then will national AI infrastructure become a catalyst for sustainable innovation and long-term competitiveness. ■

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“Every country must define its own AI strategy by deciding how data, compute, energy, and infrastructure are governed to convert opportunity into sustainable economic investment.”

Irina Karagyaur
Co-Founder & General Manager, BQ9 Agency



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Sovereign AI Must be Built for the Long Term

Irina Karagyaur
Co-Founder & General Manager, BQ9 Agency

As artificial intelligence becomes embedded in every aspect of society, nations must look beyond simply expanding computing capacity. The greater challenge is building sovereign, resilient and sustainable AI infrastructure that reflects each country’s strategic priorities, protects critical assets and enables long-term economic competitiveness.

For this reason, I believe the most important recommendation is building resilient and sustainable AI infrastructure. However, resilience must also include sovereignty. Every nation has unique economic priorities, regulatory frameworks and strategic dependencies, meaning there can be no universal definition of sovereign AI. Each country must determine how its data, compute resources, models and digital infrastructure should be governed to support national interests while remaining open to innovation.

As AI adoption accelerates, infrastructure must also be designed responsibly. Growing demand for data centres and advanced computing places increasing pressure on energy and water resources, making sustainability a strategic requirement rather than an environmental aspiration. Long-term AI leadership will depend on infrastructure capable of supporting rapid innovation without compromising resilience or resource security.

Cybersecurity must become an integral part of this strategy. The rise of autonomous AI agents and increasingly sophisticated digital ecosystems introduces new risks around sensitive data, intellectual property and national security. Protecting these assets requires stronger governance, specialist talent and collaborative dialogue between governments, industry and academia.

Ultimately, sovereign AI is not simply about technology ownership—it is about giving every nation the ability to shape AI according to its own values, priorities and long-term vision while building resilient infrastructure capable of supporting future innovation.■



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“Public-private partnerships provide the strategic alignment needed to ensure AI opportunities are accessible across the entire ecosystem rather than concentrated within a few organizations.”

Ramy AlDamati
Chief Metaverse & AI Strategy Officer, MetaServ ME



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Measure AI Infrastructure by Economic Value

Ramy AlDamati
Chief Metaverse & AI Strategy Officer, MetaServe Middle East

Building national AI infrastructure is only the first step. The greater challenge is ensuring that these investments generate measurable economic outcomes. For this reason, I believe the most important recommendation is linking AI infrastructure investment to economic value.

The first four recommendations—national strategies, access to compute, public-private partnerships and resilient infrastructure—create the capability to deploy AI. The fifth recommendation asks a more important question: what value does that capability produce? Nations should evaluate AI investments by their ability to increase productivity, strengthen competitiveness, improve public services and create new sources of economic growth rather than simply counting data centres or computing resources.

Achieving these outcomes requires a coordinated ecosystem. Governments provide strategic direction, while industry contributes technology, implementation expertise and innovation. Public-private collaboration also ensures that AI infrastructure benefits not only large enterprises, but startups, universities, researchers and SMEs that drive broader innovation across the economy.

Strong governance must underpin this transformation. As AI adoption accelerates, organizations need frameworks that encourage innovation while maintaining accountability, responsible deployment and long-term sustainability. Infrastructure, governance and leadership should evolve together to maximize national competitiveness.

Ultimately, AI infrastructure should not be viewed as an end in itself. Its success should be measured by the economic opportunities it creates, the industries it transforms and the long-term value it delivers to society. ■

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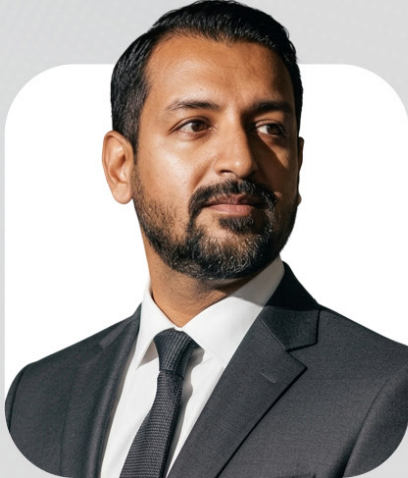








SOUNDINGS



“Strong public-private partnerships enable countries to expand infrastructure, develop local talent, and meet growing energy demand while supporting both citizens and AI-driven economic growth.”

Robin Machado
Head of Digital R&D MEA, Siemens Energy
& ADYBC Board Member

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Partnerships Turn AI Infrastructure into National Capability

Robin Benet Machado
Head of Digital R&D MEA, Siemens Energy
& ADYBC Board Member

Artificial intelligence infrastructure is only valuable when it is supported by the partnerships and execution needed to transform investment into national capability. While resilient infrastructure and national AI strategies are essential foundations, they should be regarded as baseline requirements. The real challenge lies in enabling organizations to access, adopt and apply AI at scale.

For this reason, I believe strengthening public-private infrastructure partnerships is the most important recommendation, closely supported by expanding access to compute and linking infrastructure investment to measurable economic outcomes. Governments, technology providers and industry each bring complementary strengths that no single organization can deliver alone. Together, they can build the energy systems, digital infrastructure and innovation ecosystems required to support widespread AI adoption.

The energy sector illustrates this challenge clearly. AI requires enormous computing power, which in turn depends on reliable energy infrastructure. Nations must therefore balance investments that support AI growth while continuing to meet the essential infrastructure needs of citizens and businesses. Public-private collaboration enables countries to mobilize investment, develop local capabilities and strengthen industrial competitiveness simultaneously.

Equally important is ensuring that startups, researchers and smaller businesses have access to AI infrastructure. Innovation cannot flourish if only a handful of organizations can afford to experiment with new technologies. Expanding access, encouraging collaboration and focusing relentlessly on execution will allow AI infrastructure to become an engine of national productivity rather than simply a collection of technology assets. ■

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Session 5 Podcast

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