

New artificial intelligence industry body launches in South Africa

An industry body called The South African Artificial Intelligence Association (SAAIA) has been launched in the country. SAAIA says it is focused on promoting the advancement of responsible AI in South Africa by uniting practitioners across commercial, government, academic, startup and NGO sectors.



Source: [Pexels](#)

"From hype to a global reality the SAAIA vision has been shaped by analysing the global and local landscape, identifying needs and filling the blanks with research. This has revealed both the challenges and opportunities AI and related smart technologies can bring to South Africa for both citizens and the wider economy. Our vision is evidence-based with responsible, human-centric AI as its foundation," SAAIA said in a statement.

10 key objectives on which SAAIA's mission is underpinned:

- Serve as the voice of the industry
- Provide analysis and research to inform strategy and decision making
- Help national, provincial and city governments with policy making
- Unite buyers and suppliers to grow the economy
- Connect SMMEs to funding to create new companies and jobs
- Attract FDI to South Africa as the "4IR gateway" to Africa
- Help African smart tech companies find markets abroad
- Showcase the best of South African AI Innovation and research
- Promote debate on inclusion, ethics, regulation and standards
- Share best practices and education resources for all

Dr Nick Bradshaw, the founder of SAAIA, stated:

"Our research has shown that AI and related automation technologies are currently impacting 120+ traditional industries

globally and creating new opportunities and challenges in timescale never seen before. The speed of this disruption is faster than any other industrial revolution that has gone before it. SAAIA seeks to encourage stakeholders in the adoption of responsible AI for the commercial and societal benefit of the citizens of South Africa with a primary focus on regulation, economic growth, trade, investment, fairness, equality and inclusivity."

The founding advisory board members include; Michalsons, GIZ, ExploreAI, Cirrus AI, TinyML Foundation, Augmented Startups, Data Economy Policy Hub (DepHUB), Socially Acceptable, mLab, Zindi, Technology Innovation Agency, ecosystem.Ai, Tshwane University of Technology, Western Cape Government and Webber Wentzel.

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