

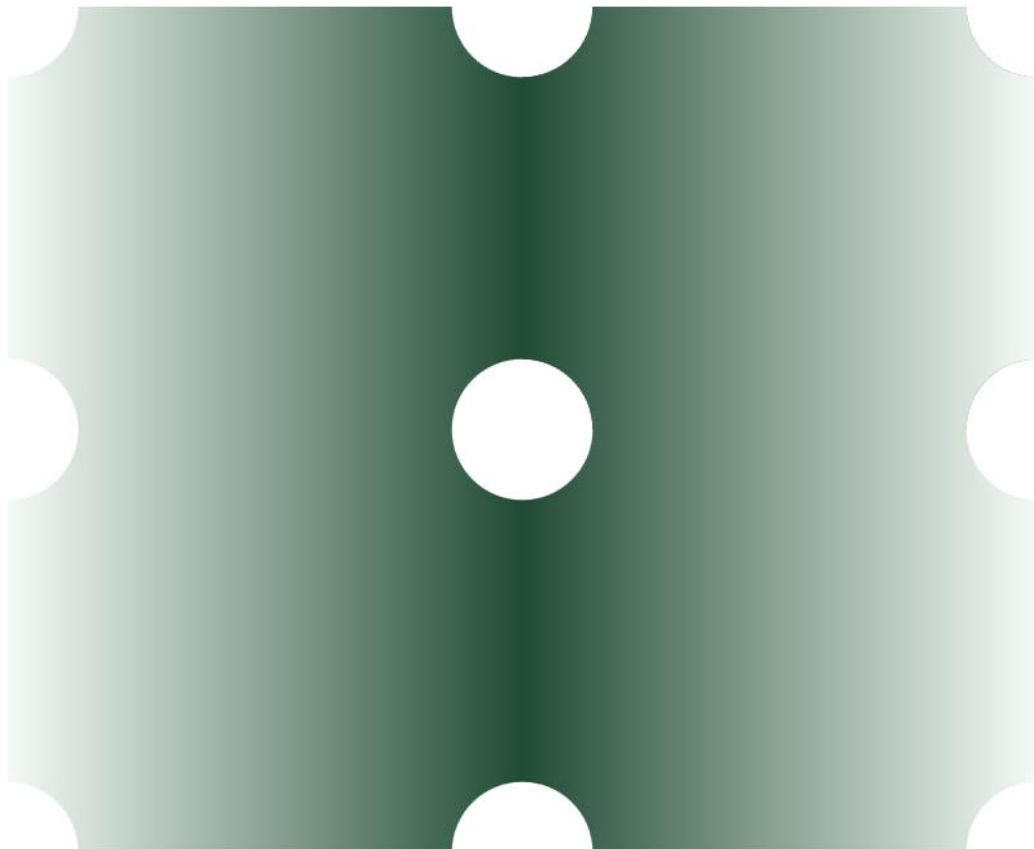


AI
AI & Partners

Risk, Compliance & Legal Teams

The Guardian and The EU AI Act

A practical guide for the Guardians of AI systems to business transformation with respect to the EU AI Act



The Guardian Playbook

Table of Contents



AI
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01

Introduction and Preamble

02

Persona Description

03

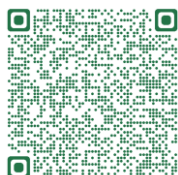
Role of Guardian In Connection With Business Maturity

04

Relationships

05

Conclusion





1 Introduction and Preamble



EU AI Act is aligned with encouraging safe and trustworthy AI.

At AI & Partners, we define EU AI Act compliant AI systems as those that are safe, secure, transparent, resilient, auditable, fair, non-biased and human-focused. Businesses that are taking steps now to become EU AI Act compliant are not only setting themselves up for success, but they are also showing that their AI/ML systems work at the higher possible levels and building continued client trust that drives additional ROI of AI initiatives.

It is evident that the importance of EU AI Act compliance to the business's success will not only continue to move forward. What could be made clearer is the contrasting roles and responsibilities needed within a business to implement EU AI Act successfully. This is exactly why we have written the EU AI Act Playbooks – to become a crucial resource within any individual motivated to drive EU AI Act compliant practices within a business.





There are five Playbooks in this Series

The first Playbook, and the one that you are currently reading, provides the background information you need to understand your role in EU AI Act. It outlines how to identify your business's EU AI Act Maturity Level (Emerging, Evolving, Engaging, Enhancing and Excelling) together with your specific role (Facilitator, Promoter, Guardian and Creator).

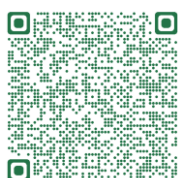
The remaining four Playbooks each cover a different EU AI Act role in depth, providing practical guidance on what to perform per level of business maturity.

Once you've read the playbooks you'll feel invigorated to deliver change and encourage the safe, secure and trustworthy use of AI within your business. If you're interested in deepening your understanding, please visit our Insights section or request a product demo with AI & Partners to help operationalise EU AI Act practices within your business.



"Adopting AI within the business isn't just about technical capabilities. It also includes operational, cultural and regulatory aspects"

Michael Charles Borrelli, Co-CEO/COO, AI & Partners





Introduction

Dear Guardian,

There are multiple different ways in which a person can engage with the EU AI Act – it can sometimes feel overwhelming and confusing on where to start.

Gratefully, this does not have to be the case. When it comes to the EU AI Act, there are four key roles within a business: Facilitator, Promoter, Guardian and Creator. Each role comes with its own set of responsibilities for making EU AI Act readiness successful and is an essential piece to the larger picture of satisfying the EU AI Act's requirements. You can't solve the EU AI Act all on your own, but if you understand what your EU AI Act role is and how you can fit into that larger picture, then you are setting yourself up for success in bringing the EU AI Act to life in your business.

You are reading this specific Playbook because you have identified your role as a Guardian. Your primary goal as a Guardian is to restrict the amount of AI-linked risk to your business. What this means in terms of the EU AI Act is that your core responsibility is to guide your business's AI adoption in a manner that protects and safeguards against unnecessary risk. From your standpoint, successful EU AI Act readiness implementation includes an overarching EU AI Act strategy for your teams, clear KPIs and incentives aligned with EU AI Act objectives, compliance on both a business- and technological-level, standardisation of EU AI Act governance and assessments, and the integration of safety, security and trustworthy analyses into AI system assessment procedures.

To help you better understand your role and responsibilities as a Guardian, this Playbook will take you on a deep dive into what you can practically do to successfully promote the EU AI Act within your business. We will cover everything from your strengths as a Guardian to specific actions that you can take at each level of the business EU AI Act maturity to how to interact with your fellow EU AI Act roles.

You are ready to put in the work to achieve EU AI Act readiness. Let us bring you the clarity and direction you need to get started and begin prioritising the EU AI Act today.

Happy reading!



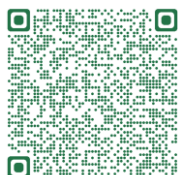


2 Persona Description

Guardian

Guide the development of AI within your business to avoid the accumulation of unnecessary risks associated with AI adoption.

AI is a powerful tool full of potential for your business, and you want your business to develop the best possible AI. Notwithstanding, you realise that AI comes with considerable risks, and it is only through the safeguarding against these risks that your business can pursue AI to the fullest. Although you don't have access to the AI system themselves, you have the ability to shape your business's underlying AI strategy for the better.

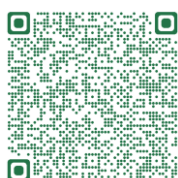




Here are some typical positions within a business you will generally be found in

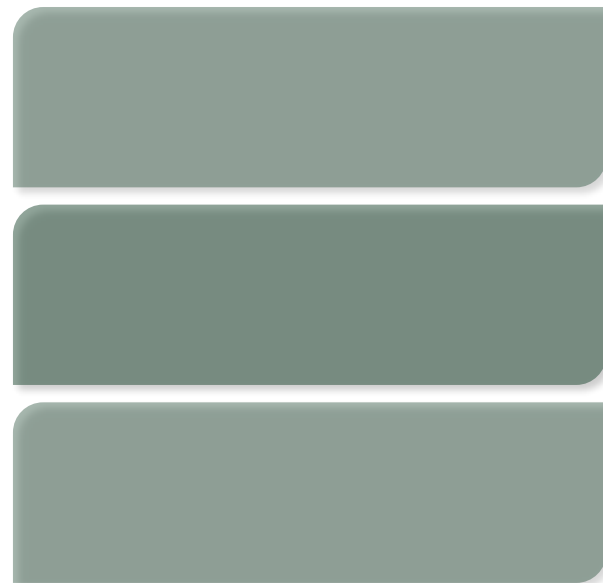
- General Counsel Risk, and Compliance Officers
- CISO
- Head of Privacy or DEI
- Board of Directors

- As a Guardian, you are in the position of decision-making power within your business. This means that your sign-off is generally needed to some extent for a AI system to go into production, giving you the means to either streamline or halt different aspects of the AI development process. Your greatest strength lies in this power, since you are the one setting the standards for what makes an AI system good enough to be utilised. By effectively incorporating the EU AI Act into the centre of your standards for AI development, deployment, use, distribution and importing, you are able to transform the EU AI Act's provision from 'nice-to-haves' for your business.
- Although you have the decision-making power over aspects of your business's AI, you do not have direct access to these AI systems and can even be far removed from their production. This means that you must rely on others to understand whether or not AI systems are up to your standards to make the final call.





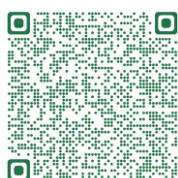
3 Role of Guardian In Connection With Business Maturity



EU AI Act readiness is not an end result but a journey through which a business grows and evolves through.

Some businesses are at the start of their journey and are just beginning to explore the potential, while others are advanced in this journey and are looking to become industry leaders. Regardless of where a business is, the key thing to recognise is that business maturity for the EU AI Act is dynamic, and the further along the journey a business is, the more advanced, beneficial, and effective its AI systems become.

Now that you know that you are a Guardian in the EU AI Act, you need to determine your business's EU AI Act maturity level, since your responsibilities are dependent on maturity level. Just as your business will grow and evolve through its EU AI Act journey, so will your role and responsibilities. Once you have identified the desired stage of maturity, you will be able to select the practical goals and actions you can take as a Guardian specific to the point in which your business is in its EU AI Act journey.



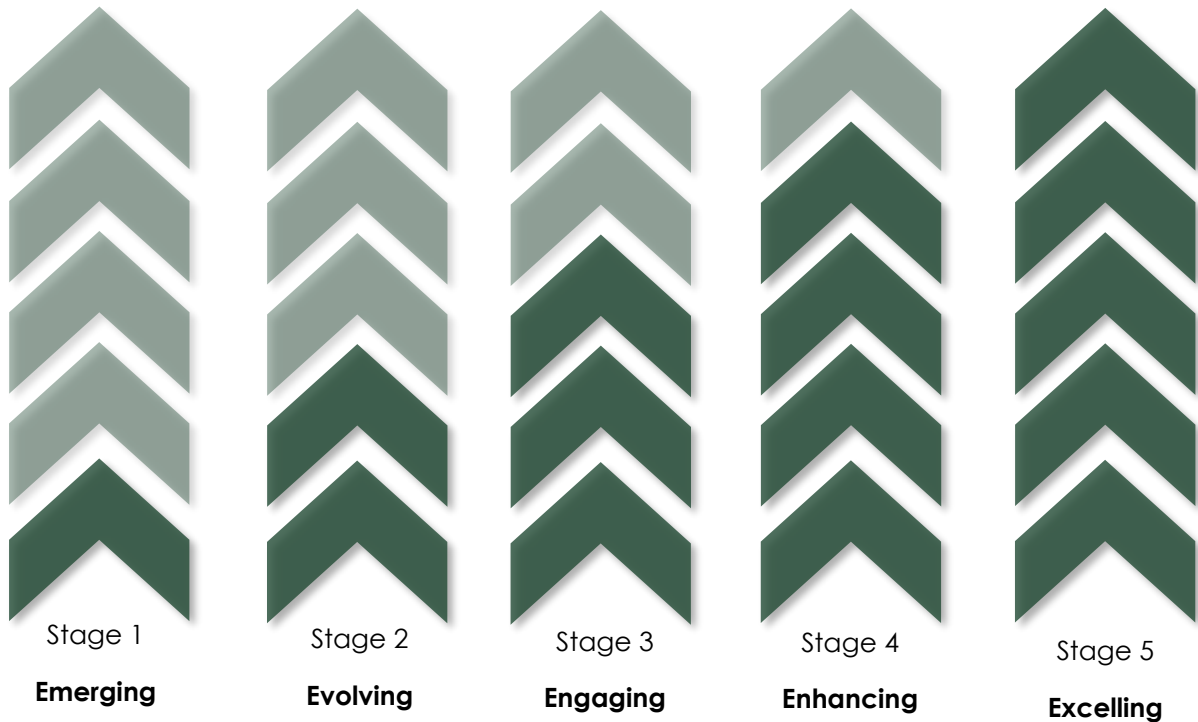
The Guardian Playbook



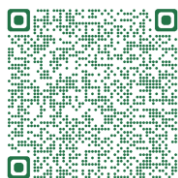
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Along this EU AI Act journey there are five stages of maturity that a business can achieve: Emerging, Evolving, Engaging, Enhancing and Excelling. Each stage has a defining philosophy and approach to AI systems which you can distinguish by identifying the existence of key indicators, including, but not limited to, actions, tools, initiatives, and engagement within a business.



If you are unsure of your business's maturity level, please refer to the EU AI Act Playbook as a resource to help you determine where you are in the EU AI Act journey.





Emerging

Stage 1

At the Emerging stage, a business is starting to explore the EU AI Act and is motivated to build an internal awareness of its provisions, requirements and obligations.

✓ As a Guardian, your primary goal during the Emerging stage is to understand the landscape: the standards under the EU AI Act that apply, what are the associated risks with your AI systems, and who are the stakeholders and impacted populations you should be considering when responsibly deploying your AI systems.



The EU AI Act is still in its infancy, which means it is not always clear what a business needs to do in order to meet the desired state of readiness. Although there are clear principles, standards and requirements under the EU AI Act, not everyone will apply to your business. So as your business begins to explore which provisions apply, it is your responsibility as a Guardian to guide this process, as the provisions will set the foundational standards upon which the entire business's AI practices are built on.

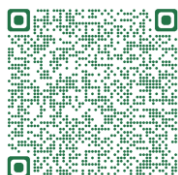
Establishing EU AI Act practices for your business is specifically the responsibility of a Guardian because you are in charge of setting the standards that the AI systems must satisfy. The EU AI Act provisions will generally become components to your business's AI standards, which means you need to select the provisions with a clear intention for impact. It is imperative to remember that although the EU AI Act is an initial place to identify what provisions apply – and what is needed – readiness is more than mere compliance. You will also need to examine the industry best practices, together with ascertain what is expected of your business in the industry.





Here are a few practical examples of how you can satisfy your objective as a Guardian at this stage:

- Inform yourself of the EU AI Act that apply to your business's technology, as these will be the first line of defence against risk. Moreover, now is a good time to conduct basic audits against the EU AI Act you know for certain apply to your firm.
- Engage with fellow stakeholders on discussions around the EU AI Act and its principles. Although you may be responsible for setting standards and holding these terms to these standards, it is best that you consider multiple perspectives when it comes to selecting the provisions.
- Look at the EU AI Act and explore what other leaders in your industry are doing in terms of readiness. You can learn from others' successes and mistakes, as this will give you insight into either best practices to pursue or misuses to avoid.

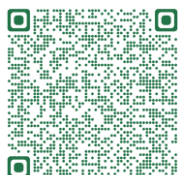




As a Guardian, you are looking for the following indicators of successful EU AI Act implementation at this stage

- **Awareness:** the EU AI Act is a common topic of discussion between you and your colleagues. You frequently hear people mentioning the EU AI Act within meetings, and your team often exchanges articles and podcast episodes talking about the different EU AI Act dimensions.
- **Identification of the EU AI Act:** At this stage, it is essential that your business implements what provisions it must currently follow as well as prepare in the near future.

✓ *When the EU AI Act is successfully implemented at this stage, you, as a Guardian, benefit from increased clarity regarding risk mapping for your business. To ensure the proper safeguards are placed to prevent risk, you must first understand the different sources of risk. Clarity on these different risks is found through analysing the EU AI Act, and stakeholder impact.*





Evolving

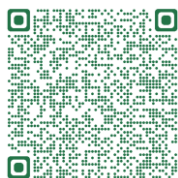
Stage 2

At the Emerging stage, a business is looking to align its policies with the required EU AI Act provisions and its motivated to establish high-level EU AI Act initiatives.

✓ During the Evolving stage, your primary goal as a Guardian is to adjust existing policies to reflect the EU AI Act provisions, as well as create new policies specifically to promote EU AI Act internally.

When it comes to protecting your business's AI against unnecessary risk, EU AI Act provisions will play a key role in shaping how your business identifies and mitigates its risk. The EU AI Act provisions should be chosen to reflect the EU AI Act as well as societal expectations for your business. For example, if your business is expected to eliminate bias from its systems, then the EU AI Act provisions are needed to guide the bias mitigation. It is your responsibility as a Guardian to understand what EU AI Act provisions are needed to protect your business from both a regulatory and ethical standpoint and to incorporate those provisions into company policies, processes and procedures.

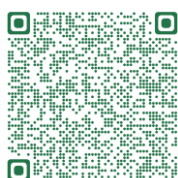
As a Guardian, you have the ability to determine the standards your business's AI systems must meet, which makes it your responsibility to ensure that these standards are reflective of the selected EU AI Act. You are in the best position to shape current policies, procedures and processes to align with EU AI Act provisions, as well as establish new policies specifically to further the EU AI Act within your business. It is imperative to remember at this stage that compliance is only one part of the equation; societal values are just as important as the EU AI Act requirements.





Here are a few practical examples of how you can satisfy your objective as a Guardian at this stage:

- Identify your business's current policies surrounding your AI practices and look for ways to incorporate the EU AI Act's provisions directly into these processes, policies and procedures.
- Require basic training on the selected EU AI Act provisions for your teams, and push to have them a requirement across your entire business.
- Establish the EU AI Act-specific policies for your business that will act as guiding documents for the coming stage of business maturity. It is helpful to consult with an advocate at the time to determine that you have selected the appropriate EU AI Act provisions for your business and that these are being translated into your business's policies.





As a Guardian, you are looking for the following indicators of successful EU AI Act implementation at this stage:

- A clear list of EU AI Act provisions: there are many dimensions of the EU AI Act, so it is essential that a business selects and prioritises which provisions are necessary for its compliance. Having a clear list of EU AI Act provisions will help you as a Guardian guide critical strategic discussions to align with the selected EU AI Act provisions.
- Set of EU AI Act-specific policies: internal organisational are essential in seeing the direction of your business's AI development. Having specific EU AI Act practices, or integrating elements of the EU AI Act into already existing policies, shows the necessary alignment and buy-in from your business.
- Roadmap to compliance: at this stage, you have identified all requirements under the EU AI Act and have a clear roadmap to compliance for all your business's systems.

✓ *When the EU AI Act is successfully implemented at this stage, you, as a Guardian benefit through a significant risk reduction to your business. By identifying the EU AI Act and beginning the process to align with their respective requirements, you have started the practical journey to safeguarding your business's AI against unnecessary risk.*





Engaging

Stage 3

At the Engaging stage, a business is moving toward the EU AI Act provisions into formal practices and is motivated to test EU AI Act processes at small scale.

✓ Your primary goal as a Guardian during the Emerging stage is to determine how to assess the effectiveness of proposed EU AI Act practices in targeted pilot programmes.

Now that your business has established what EU AI Act provisions are needed to protect the AI systems from unnecessary risk, it is time to move those provisions into practice. The process can be challenging, as it requires rounds of testing, feedback, and adjustment through pilot programs as you discover what works best for your business. One important aspect of this process is assessment, as you need to determine the likelihood of adoption of the new EU AI Act provisions, as well as establish what qualifies as a successful EU AI Act practice in the first place. It is your responsibility as a Guardian to ensure these early-stage assessments examine the impact of EU AI Act pilot programs for effectiveness in reaching the new EU AI Act provisions.

The purpose of implementing EU AI Act provisions is to embed these into the AI development process. This means adjusting the standards AI systems must meet in order to reflect the EU AI Act provisions, and since you, as a Guardian, helped set these standards, it is now your specific responsibility to assess whether or not those standards are being met. It is especially important to set up an assessment process during the pilot testing phases so that you can establish a quality baseline, as this will be crucial to the expansion of the EU AI Act provisions cross-business.





Here are a few practical examples of how you can satisfy your objective as a Guardian at this stage:

- Set minimum requirements that the EU AI Act pilot programs must meet to be considered successful in ensuring that the system has fulfilled the necessary standards.
- Evaluate if the pilot programs in EU AI Act are effectively mitigating the targeted risks associated with AI or if a modification is needed.
- There are a growing number of tools designed specifically to support teams in implementing the EU AI Act. Start to explore what tools exist, and consider what kind types will be needed to assist in expanding the EU AI Act provisions across your entire business.





As a Guardian, you are looking for the following indicators of successful EU AI Act implementation:

- Initial EU AI Act assessments: in order to understand the effectiveness of your business' efforts in the EU AI Act, it is essential that EU AI Act assessments are created to analyse the impact of your EU AI Act initiatives. Additionally, there need to be EU AI Act-specific assessments that are conducted prior to model production in order to monitor for unnecessary risk.
- Completed pilot test: creating and implementing effective EU AI Act frameworks and standards takes time. At this stage, pilot tests provide crucial feedback that helps determine the direction of efforts needed to execute on the EU AI Act.
- Cross-functional EU AI Act processes: siloed teams make it incredibly difficult to successfully implement EU AI Act practices. At this stage, you should begin to see cross-functional EU AI Act processes centred around specific principles.

✓ *When the EU AI Act is successfully implemented at this stage, you, as a Guardian, benefit through a tangible risk assessment of your business's AI systems. Because of the work done through the pilot programs, you have gained clarity on what works and doesn't in effective risk mitigation measures. Additionally, the cross-functional EU AI Act processes create the points in time at which collaboration must take place for a AI system to pass the necessary assessments.*





Enhancing

Stage 4

At the Enhancing stage, a business is standardising its EU AI Act practices and is motivated to optimise the adoption of the EU AI Act.

✓ At the stage of Enhancing, your primary goal as a Guardian is to scale the EU AI Assessments and explore opportunities to automate aspects of AI governance..

As your business scales its EU AI Act practices to stretch across multiple teams and departments, it is essential that the adoption of these practices is monitored and evaluated for effectiveness. It is important to keep in mind at this stage that there is a difference between successfully adopting a new EU AI Act practice and adopting a successful EU AI Act practice. Learning how to operate within the new EU AI Act is an important component of adopting the EU AI Act. However, these standards and practices need to be effective in implementing the EU AI Act's principles if the overall EU AI Act strategy is to be a success. It is your responsibility as a Guardian to assess if the new EU AI Act practices are being adopted, as well as to evaluate if the practices are resulting in a positive impact aligned with the EU AI Act's principles.

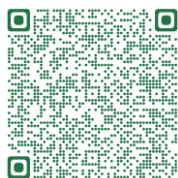
Once there is a standard assessment process in place, your business will have the ability to objectively examine the impact of its EU AI Act principles. As a Guardian, you are responsible for evaluating these assessments and determining areas in need of improvement. You are also able to understand when and where automation of AI governance can take place and increase the efficiency of your business's EU AI Act practices.





Here are few practices examples of how can achieve your goal as a Guardian at this stage:

- Establish a standard assessment and reporting process that enables clear and concise evaluation of EU AI Act impact and adoption. Be sure to build into this assessment process achievable EU AI Act metrics and objectives.
- Explore what kinds of tools are available to help automate aspects of the AI governance processes and to support your humans at the business-as-usual processes.
- Feedback at the Enhancing stage is essential to ensuring the EU AI Act practices work at scale and that the EU AI Act metrics are resulting in the desired effects. Carve out time for your teams to discuss the EU AI Act and participate in these processes.





As a Guardian, you are looking for the following indicators of successful EU AI Act implementation at this stage:

- Standard EU AI Act tools, assessments and tools: at this stage, you should be scaling your test tools frameworks, and assessments to reach across your entire business. This means that as a Guardian, your teams are collaborating cross-functionally using the same EU AI Act tools and frameworks. You should also be establishing standardised governance artifacts and reports that your development teams produce to facilitate consistent tracking and management of EU AI Act issues.
- EU AI Act metrics: incentives and objectives are the main drivers of action for your teams. At this stage, you should have selected EU AI Act-specific metrics that have been designed to promote and encourage the adoption of EU AI Act practices.

✓ *When the EU AI Act is successfully implemented at this stage, you, as a Guardian, benefit through increasing the efficiency of governing your AI at scale. By standardising both AI and EU AI Act practices through tools and frameworks, you eliminate time spent searching for EU AI Act checkpoints, as these are naturally tracked through your new practices. Additionally, you now have the ability to critically assess your AI and EU AI Act practices across multiple teams and departments, which enables you to optimise for communication, risk-reduction and governance at scale.*





Excelling

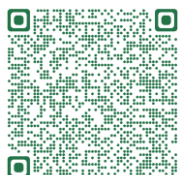
Stage 5

At the Excelling stage, a business is proactively using the EU AI Act as a differentiator and is motivated to become an industry thought leader and framework.

✓ As a Guardian, your primary goal at the final stage of Excelling is to revisit your business's AI standards and examine ways in which you can proactively improve.

Congratulations on reaching the final stage; it is a true accomplishment! You are now in an exciting position to establish your business as an industry leader in the EU AI Act. As many businesses are now looking to you as a source for best practices with respect to the EU AI Act, it is essential that you maintain your efforts and explore new ways of tackling EU AI Act challenges. As a Guardian, it is your responsibility to contribute to your business's thought leadership efforts in the EU AI Act and to ensure that your EU AI Act practices are moving beyond risk mitigation to encompass values as an innovator and differentiator.

As a Guardian, it has been your responsibility throughout your business's EU AI Act journey to ensure that your AI systems are compliant and safeguarded against risk. Now that you have achieved this level of preparedness, your job is not done. Instead, you are now at the exciting point in time when you can proactively explore ways in which your business can reinvent industry best practices in EU AI Act. At the end of the day you are responsible for your business's AI standards, and so you have the opportunity to set high standards that will differentiate you as a true leader in the EU AI Act.





Here are a few practical examples of how you can satisfy your objective as a Guardian at this stage:

- Start a working group with Guardians from other businesses to discuss and publish reports on best practices and insights in the EU AI Act.
- Give a speech, sit on a panel, or simply attend conferences in your area of expertise and talk about your experience your business's practices in the EU AI Act.
- Establish a multi-stakeholder task force to explore new solutions for previously unsolved EU AI Act challenges that your business has encountered during your EU AI Act journey.





Congratulations, you have reached the last stage! Be sure to remember, though, that the EU AI Act is a journey and not an end destination; you will need to stay up to date on your EU AI Act efforts in order to remain an industry leader. As a Guardian, you are looking for the following indicators of successful EU AI Act implementation at this stage:

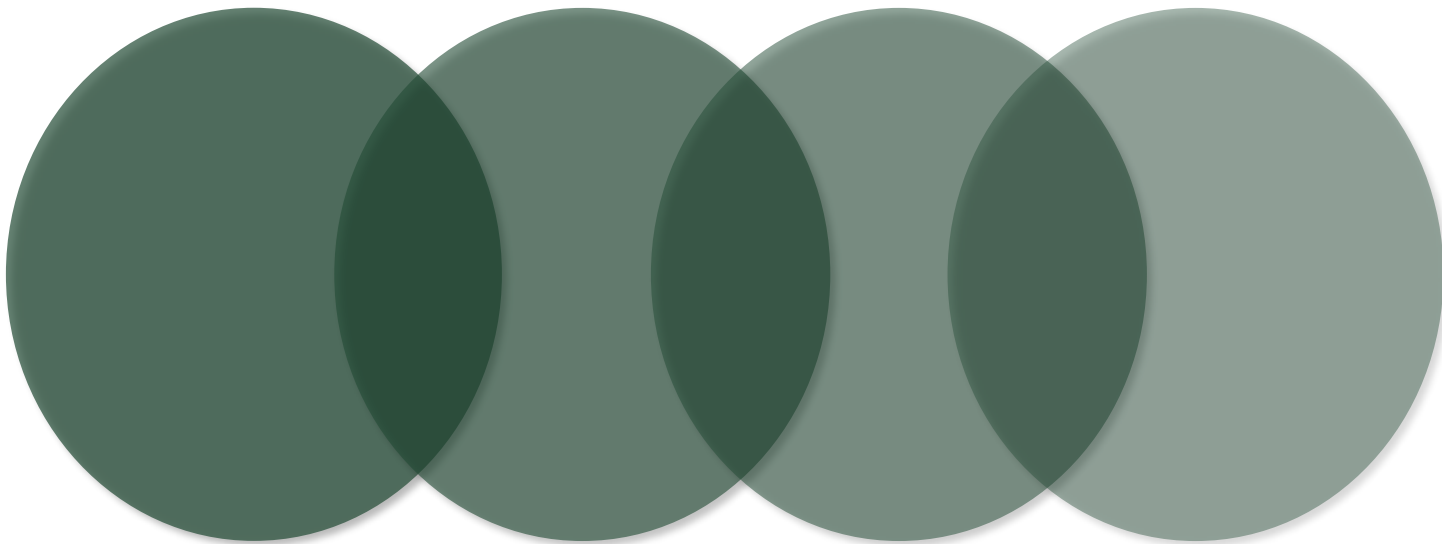
- Speaking engagements: as your business becomes a leader in the EU AI Act, you, as a Guardian, will also have the opportunity to help contribute to thought leadership in the EU AI Act.
- EU AI Act Research & Development: once your business has reached the final level of business maturity, it is become a leader in the EU AI Act. This means you are in unique position to contribute to new innovation and development in the EU AI Act. An indication of success at this level is a specific budget of money and resources being allocated for research and development in EU AI Act.

✓ When the EU AI Act is successfully implemented at this stage, you, as a Guardian, benefit by getting the opportunity to become a thought leader in the EU AI Act and lead your teams on the cutting edge of the EU AI Act. Now that your business is an industry leader, there is potential and motivation to remain in a leadership position within the EU AI Act, which requires continued innovation and problem-solving for EU AI Act challenges.



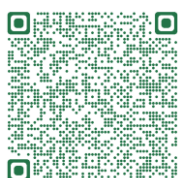


4 Relationships



EU AI Act is a multi-stakeholder endeavour.

As a Guardian, you play a pivotal role in making EU AI Act readiness successful within your business. Notwithstanding, you are not alone in your efforts, as the EU AI Act is a multi-stakeholder endeavour. Let's examine how your role as a Guardian typically engages, supports, and relies on the other three EU AI Act roles.



The Guardian Playbook



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Creator

Guardian

You can find **Creators** working in: **Product Development & Engineering Teams**.

The relationship between the Guardian and Creator can sometimes feel slightly strained. However, when these two roles learn to communicate openly and clearly, there is a strong potential for a mutually supportive relationship. The Creator must communicate in detail the limitations of AI systems, particularly in the cases that the AI system is not necessarily as fully developed of a solution that it originally envisaged. This allows the Guardian to make the critical call as to whether or not the AI system is safe enough to put into production. To express it otherwise, the Creator relies on the Guardian to inform them when an AI system is not safe enough for production, while the Guardian relies on the Creator to provide essential information about the AI system in order to make the call.

Facilitator

Guardian

You can find **Facilitator** working in: **Technology & Innovative Executive Teams**.

Both the Guardian and its Facilitator are in leadership positions, which provides a strong opportunity for the two to work together in enacting organisational change for the EU AI Act. The Facilitator and Guardian must rely on each other to drive EU AI Act initiatives in different parts of the business and so must ensure they are in alignment with overall objectives for EU AI Act change. The Facilitator can also rely on the Guardian for guidance in establishing EU AI Act assessments for their teams, as the Guardian will be a valid source of information into what types of risks a Facilitator's teams will need to guard against.

Promoter

Guardian

You can find **Promoters** working in: **Customer Success & User Experience teams**.

When it comes to the Promoter and Guardian relationship, this is the most significant pairing a Guardian can have. This is because the Guardian has the leadership power that the Promoter lacks and is usually the role in charge of setting the Promoter's objectives. The Guardian and Promoter must work closely together, as the Guardian will be transformational in aligning the Promoter's objectives to the EU AI Act's requirements, while the Promoter will be crucial in providing the Guardian with in-depth information on policy developments and user feedback.





Conclusion

Congratulations. You now have the knowledge needed to get started on bringing the EU AI Act into your business!

With this information you have set yourself up for success in helping bring the EU AI Act to your business – and being a success. By taking a deep dive into your role as a Guardian and exploring what strengths you can contribute to implementing the EU AI Act, you have gained clarity into the practical actions you can take to improve and become an industry leader in the EU AI Act world.

You now have a guide for how to engage and promote business EU AI Act transformation at every maturity level within your business. Now, it's time to go out and use it.

If you are unsure whether your business is in in terms of maturity , you can refer back to the EU AI Act Business Transformation Playbook for more information on how to identify the business maturity level. If you are unsure where or not you fit the Guardian role or want to know more about the other roles, you can refer to the other three Playbooks on Facilitator, Promoter and Creator.

Remember: the EU AI Act is a multi-stakeholder opportunity for your business, so be sure to share the Playbooks with your team – and beyond.

Now that you've finished the Playbooks you should feel invigorated to embrace change and promote the safe, secure and trustworthy use, deployment, development, importing and distribution of AI systems within your business. If you're eager to further your understanding, please visit the insights section of our website or request a product demo with AI & Partners to help operationalise EU AI Act practices within your business.

