



Uruguay
Presidencia



Public Sector Strategic Committee for Artificial Intelligence and Data

Minutes No.
2/2024

Version: 1 Date:
13/06/2024 Time:
14:00

Attendees

Representatives of	% attendance at the meeting	Name
AGESIC	100%	Virginia Pardo, Gabriel Hernández, Maximiliano Maneiro, Ninoschka Dante, Angie Lecot, Nancy Ibarra
MEC	100%	Alberto Majó
MEF	0%	Did not appoint a representative
MIEM	100%	Pascual Gattas
MTSS	100%	Marcelo Belén
INE	100%	María Victoria Susena
INDHDP	100%	Marcos Israel
ANII	100%	Flavio Caiafa
URCDP	100%	Gonzalo Sosa

Agenda

The meeting was convened to consider the following agenda

1. Strategic Committee minutes and repository:
 - Agree on approval and publication criteria
 - Review access to the shared repository
2. Report to Parliament:
 - Preparation process
 - Brief presentation on the approach and proposals received
3. Toward a first draft of the AI Strategy
 - Discussion and representatives' positions on the objectives
 - Discussion of different lines of action to incorporate
4. Announcements by participants and next steps

Meeting proceedings

The meeting was moderated by Ninoschka Dante.

At the outset, the agreements from the Strategic Committee's first meeting were reviewed and their implementation checked.

Item 1 on this meeting's agenda: Strategic Committee minutes and repository. The following agreements were reached:

- The minutes will be emailed to the representatives of each agency on the Strategic Committee, who will have 10 days to review them and submit comments. Once this period has elapsed, the comments received will be incorporated and the minutes will be deemed approved.
- A space will be created on the Agesic website to publish the public versions of the approved minutes.

- For the documentation repository for the Strategic Committee's work, a space is available on Agesic's Nextcloud.

Item 2. Report to Parliament

Gonzalo Sosa presents a summary of the activities underway to comply with Art. 74 of Law 20.212 regarding preparation of a report to Parliament with recommendations on the legal regulation of artificial intelligence and data strategies. Deadline: June 28, 2024.

The various thematic areas emerging from the dialogue roundtables and the review of international references were considered. With an initial background draft prepared by the Personal Data Regulatory and Control Unit (URCDP), other public sector agencies were invited to provide further input to Agesic's perspective for the report's preparation.

The consultation was subsequently opened to other civil society, academic and private sector stakeholders through the participation platform.

He mentioned that not all contributions received would necessarily be reflected in the report, but they would be included in the version submitted to Parliament.

He added that the report's orientation follows the provisions of the article cited above: ethical AI development, protection of human rights and promotion of technological innovation.

Regarding international precedents, Gonzalo Sosa mentions that the orientation is potentially toward regulating artificial intelligence. Some points mentioned:

- Greater decentralization in the United States. Executive Order addressing the role of the entities
- In Europe, the risk-based approach and the "red lines" drawn in this regard are more prominent

- There is considerable regulation in terms of principles, with a range of possibilities that takes local characteristics into account

To conclude this item, he notes that some issues will be raised in the report for analysis.

Then, in response to a question about regulatory sandboxes provided for in Art. 75 of Law 20.212, Gonzalo Sosa states that the proposal is progressing toward signature and is under review by the Presidency's Legal Unit.

Item 3. Toward a first draft of the AI Strategy

Ninoschka Dante refers to the document compiling and organizing contributions from the dialogue roundtables in the review process for the Artificial Intelligence Strategy, which was shared in the Strategic Committee's repository.

Some 500 proposals emerged from this process and were considered in the compilation.

She proposes working on the Committee's vision of objectives and lines of action to incorporate into the Artificial Intelligence Strategy, considering conditions in Uruguay and taking a forward-looking perspective. She mentioned the document's structure and the thematic areas it considers.

She proposes a round of contributions on these areas, stressing that the overall vision must be that of the Strategy.

Pascual Gattas refers to three points:

- He notes that clearly the issue of developing capabilities at the educational level, at universities, in critical thinking and among the general public regarding this tool must be a central area in which much remains to be done.
- Data management as a basis for applying analytical tools and obtaining results based on data standardized by area, such as healthcare, enabling research in each of them. He mentions that there is a great deal of information to process and work with for

government decision-making, and also to consider what to share and what not to share in the private sector. Sharing to achieve positive results, given that each company is protective of its own information.

- Infrastructure: he notes the importance of developing infrastructure at the national level, both for government and for research, with laboratories to foster startups.

María Victoria Susena agrees with the preceding remarks and adds that, on data sharing, interoperability should begin with public agencies, since it is harder to achieve in the private sector. A challenge: thinking through the governance of this process.

Virginia Pardo also mentions the importance of infrastructure, clearly defining the goal to be achieved: improve it, rent it, build it—what exactly should be achieved? And how will it then support the actions to be implemented? Similarly, in training, the purpose must be clear: education, workforce retraining, etc.

Alberto Majó mentions that capability development must be linked to civic culture. He notes that it concerns citizens' responsible use and critical thinking, rather than only technical training. Uruguay's civic culture should be used to provide training on these issues. He cited the case of the Super Computer Center in Barcelona, which made Spain a leader.

Flavio Caiafa returns to the three points raised by Pascual Gattas, stating that these are the areas that emerge in meetings with companies and people working in AI. On training, he stresses that it must extend from school to university. He also notes that there is an issue of civic responsibility and that it must be explained that we have "digital drugs" at hand, which is critical and has no limits.

Regarding data, he mentions that the public is constantly asked to provide data. He adds that there is some light ahead, citing the case of Salud.Uy, where the situation is much better than expected and where, with little effort in relative terms, it would be possible to make available to

researchers anonymized information from people's medical records. He proposes a pilot to assess this.

Regarding the Strategy, he states that the challenging objective is to keep data protection aligned with the European framework while avoiding restrictions on technological development. A balance: data management and protection.

Regarding infrastructure, he mentions that the cloud will be the provider, although we do not own the cloud; we use it. At some point, having infrastructure of our own will become economically necessary. The concept of sovereign national infrastructure. He adds that before this happens, it may be worthwhile to have R&D&I infrastructure with modern servers.

Alberto Majó stresses that the national infrastructure strategy should include a research component with budget funding. To be a country capable of using and adapting available knowledge. R&D&I would be a strategy for using the AI strategy.

Regarding R&D&I, Ninoschka Dante calls for work to create mechanisms in this area. More generally, she suggests thinking about how to turn problems into national objectives, then into specific objectives, and how the Strategy can build on these issues.

Flavio Caiafa proposes making R&D&I a specific line in the strategy with initial infrastructure. He mentions opportunities for countries with renewable electricity mixes, given that AI processing data centers consume a great deal of energy and there is interest in ensuring sustainable infrastructure. Industrial electricity consumption accounts for the largest share of national consumption. If 90% of electricity were renewable, that would be very good. It would be necessary to see whether the benefit outweighs the other lines of activity in Uruguay.

Virginia Pardo notes that we must safeguard all the rights and principles to be protected. Promote the idea that "we do things well here," maintaining trust, security, capabilities, educated citizens, expert technicians, etc. Maintaining this policy is a major distinguishing factor in the region. It emerged in the dialogue roundtables

as a national asset. The question of where to direct the budget to continue this work also arose: a place for research, infrastructure for pilots, for example.

Ninoschka Dante added that, in the dialogue roundtables with the private sector, creative industries and entrepreneurs, one consideration raised for the strategy was how Uruguayan entrepreneurs distinguish themselves, what standards they meet, etc., with the idea of a “distinctive seal.” Different sectors can build on the Strategy’s lines of action. She also mentioned what the different strategies have in common in terms of methodology:

- institutional framework
- enabling components
- regulation – what the technical, ethical and regulatory frameworks are
- innovation, investment in AI
- international cooperation
- which sectors are prioritized
- talent management, impact on employment

Marcos Israel noted that the Executive Branch (PE) has expanded in recent years and that an oversight body should not be located within it. Solutions have taken the form of Decentralized Services (SSDD) or autonomous bodies within the Legislative Branch (PL). He adds that Agesic should leave the Presidency and have a status like that of the Communications Services Regulatory Unit (URSEC), which is independent: an oversight body not influenced by any branch of government. He considers this important for AI safety and oversight.

Then, regarding the concern raised by the data trust mentioned in the summary document, he notes that the issue deserves close scrutiny, precisely where data is commercialized. Legislation on trusts exists, but something more specific would be needed for this case.

Another concern is the data itself. He gives the example of the Human Rights Institution and Ombudsman's Office (INDHDP), which requests data and finds it extremely difficult to obtain it for various reasons. Without access to data, it cannot work. There is talk of AI, but if basic knowledge cannot be generated, the question of what to do with AI must be raised. Part of the strategy should be to change the mindset regarding data management.

Regarding the data trust, he mentions that some companies sell or rent their databases to companies that develop AI. How to handle this issue needs to be considered.

Gonzalo Sosa notes that the data trust has not been assessed as a tool. There is a law containing a set of solutions. It has not always been applied, and not everyone has the same understanding of how to apply it. Some provisions exist that we are unaware of. The communication of data is not barred if the purposes are known and the law does not prohibit it. The law has specific mechanisms for regulating this.

Flavio Caiafa adds that one issue is data collected by the State and shared among its agencies. Whenever citizens interact with the State, they are asked for data. Another issue is how to protect personal data when someone enters a website and agrees to data sharing.

Ninoschka Dante mentions another area that emerged in the dialogue roundtables: education and employment, along with the need for enabling instruments for SMEs, entrepreneurs, etc. Its feasibility should be checked so it can be included in the Strategy as an objective or line of action.

Marcelo Belén adds that the National Employment Directorate (DINAE) has no actions in this area, as its focus is on solving employment-access problems for specific sectors. He adds that there are some initiatives at the National Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (INEFOP), the agency that leads training.

Virginia Pardo mentions the need to understand AI's impact in the region and find out whether there is an assessment, for example, of which jobs are expected to disappear or change. Perhaps the starting point should be an assessment of the current situation. She proposes addressing this issue in an expanded meeting with the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS).

Flavio Caiafa considers AI a continuation of digital transformation, so education must focus on everyone from schoolchildren to adults. Data must also be organized.

Maximiliano Maneiro notes that we are in an era in which AI exists even without data, and businesses can be created “out of nothing” simply by creating generative AI and displacing others.

Upcoming activities

- Finalize the report from the dialogue roundtable with the Creative Industries sector for inclusion in the analysis
- Agesic to convene working subgroup meetings to finalize aspects of different lines of the AI Strategy:
 - Training and employment area with MTSS
 - Education area with academia
 - Infrastructure area
- Share the summary of contributions from the Data Strategy roundtables for analysis within the Strategic Committee

Next meeting: Convene a Strategic Committee meeting once the working subgroup meetings have taken place.

Closing time: 15:50.