AI and Digital Economy Training Course: Policy, Platforms, Payments and Smart Manufacturing

9 – 13 November 2026
Barcelona

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Ref: 595_30703 **Date:** 9 – 13 November 2026 **Location:** Barcelona **Fees:** 4800 GBP

Programme Summary

AI and digital economy is the subject of this one-week training course for strategic leaders in government and business, ending in an adoption brief for one organisation. Large digital economies combine AI industrial policy, platform ecosystems, digital payments and smart manufacturing, yet leaders often study them through headlines rather than evidence. The programme compares how policy, data rules, platforms and factories reinforce each other, then converts that comparison into choices for the participant's own organisation. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on the AI and digital economy to mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

Investment in artificial intelligence and digital platforms now shapes how economies grow, how services are delivered and how supply chains are organised. Leaders who read these shifts only from outside risk copying visible features while missing the policy, data and payment foundations beneath them. A structured comparison shows which conditions made results possible and which can be adapted. Boards and ministries then decide on evidence rather than imitation.

- Adoption Risk: Falls as leaders test which enabling conditions are present before committing to an AI initiative.
- Policy Alignment: Improves as industrial policy choices are compared with the organisation's own mandate.
- Data Exposure: Falls as data governance duties are mapped to platform and payment flows.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Two-sided market model: Its logic of network effects frames the platform analysis in Session 2.
- Technology adoption model: Its view of organisational, technical and environmental conditions shapes the enabling conditions work in Sessions 1 and 5.
- Data lifecycle model: Its stages from collection to deletion structure the governance review in Session 3.
- Maturity model: Its staged levels support the factory assessment in Session 4.

Intended Participants

- Strategy leaders who must decide where AI and digital platforms fit the organisation's direction.
- Policy and planning officials who shape industrial and digital programmes.
- Digital and technology directors who sponsor platform, payment or data initiatives.
- Operations executives who oversee production and supply chains.
- Risk and legal heads who advise on data and AI obligations.

Typical sectors include government, banking, manufacturing and retail.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to construct a systems map of an AI-led digital economy from policy to production.
2. Participants will be able to evaluate platform and payment ecosystems for network effects and dependencies.
3. Participants will be able to diagnose data governance and AI regulation duties that shape platform and factory choices.
4. Participants will be able to assess smart manufacturing maturity and workforce demands.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise which lessons transfer to their own organisation.
6. Participants will be able to justify an adoption brief to an executive committee.

Programme Structure

Day 1: AI and Digital Economy Foundations

What makes a large AI-led digital economy work, and how can it be read as a system?

- Digital Economy Systems Map
- Enabling Conditions Matrix
- Industrial Policy Instruments Review
- Platform Ecosystem Anatomy
- Comparative Case Selection Grid

Day 2: Platforms and Digital Payments

How do platforms and payment rails create network effects, and where do dependencies sit?

- Two-Sided Market Model
- Payment Rail Dependency Map
- Service Bundling Analysis
- Merchant and Consumer Adoption Curve
- Platform Dependency Scorecard

Day 3: Data Governance and AI Regulation

Which data and AI rules shape what platforms and manufacturers may do?

- Data Classification Ladder
- Cross-Border Data Flow Test
- Personal Data Protection Duties Review
- Generative AI Service Rules Comparison
- Regulatory Impact Heat Map

Day 4: Smart Manufacturing and Industrial AI

How does AI change production, supply chains and workforce demand?

- Smart Factory Maturity Model
- Industrial Data Pipeline Review
- Predictive Operations Use Cases
- Supply Chain Integration Map
- Workforce Skills Transition Plan

Day 5: Applying the Tools to One Organisation

Which lessons transfer to the organisation, and what should it do first?

- Applying the Session 1 Enabling Conditions Matrix
- Using the Session 2 Platform Dependency Scorecard
- Running the Session 3 Regulatory Impact Heat Map
- Checking the Session 4 Smart Factory Maturity Model
- Completing the Adoption Brief

Methodology

The programme uses case analysis supported by structured exercises. Participants work in mixed teams on anonymised case material drawn from public administration, banking, manufacturing and retail settings. Each team compares what a large digital economy did with what its own organisation could do, tests assumptions against evidence and receives written facilitator feedback on every exercise set.

- Suggested activity: Mapping a payment journey from customer app to settlement.
- Suggested activity: Rating a regulation set against a platform's data flows.
- Suggested activity: Scoring a factory case on the maturity model.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes an adoption brief for one organisation. It holds a systems map, an enabling conditions matrix, a regulatory impact heat map, a prioritised list of transferable lessons and a first-step plan. The brief is used at work to open discussion with an executive committee and to shape the next planning cycle.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is AI and digital economy suitable for leaders without a technical background?

Yes. AI and digital economy is taught at strategic level, using maps, scorecards and case material, so no programming or engineering background is assumed.

Which models does AI and digital economy draw on?

AI and digital economy draws on a two-sided market model, a technology adoption model, a data lifecycle model and a maturity model, each applied to case evidence.

How is the brief from AI and digital economy used at work?

You use the adoption brief to open discussion with an executive committee, to rank first steps and to shape the next planning cycle.

How does AI and digital economy differ from a general AI strategy programme?

AI and digital economy compares policy, platforms, payments, data rules and factories as one system, while a general AI strategy programme focuses on one organisation's use cases.