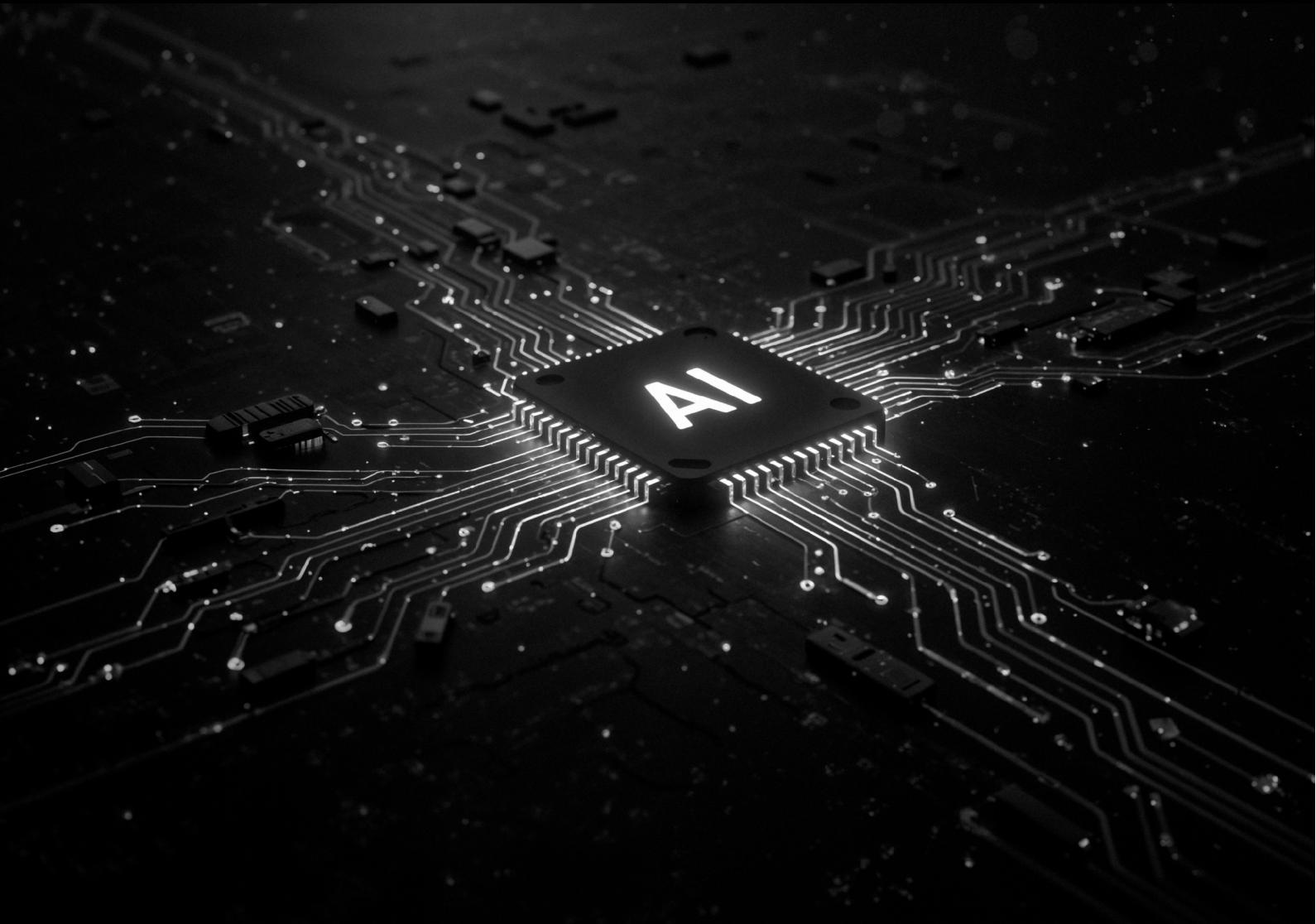




DIGITAL MEDIA & ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

SABS publishes draft AI standards for public comment

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The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) has published a series of draft standards on artificial intelligence (AI) for public comment.

The drafts adopt international ISO/IEC standards as South African documents, and cover transparency, data quality, human oversight, and the benefits and environmental impact of AI. While the standards are voluntary, they are likely to become the local benchmark for responsible AI, in line with international best practice, creating alignment between South Africa and global standards.

Interested parties, including organisations that develop or use AI, may submit comments by 10 November 2026.

The SABS has published draft standards, technical specifications and technical reports governing the use of AI in South Africa.

The drafts were prepared by the SABS Technical Committee on Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence (SABS/TC 001/SC 42), which has proposed that the documents should become South African standards, technical reports and technical specifications.

Each draft is an identical adoption of an existing ISO/IEC document on artificial intelligence, without local changes. In other words, the international text is replicated in the South African documents.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) are independent international bodies that develop standards through experts nominated by ISO member bodies. Their joint AI committee is ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 42, which the local SABS committee mirrors. Because ISO/IEC standards are developed by consensus across many countries, they are widely recognised by regulators, investors and business partners, and are often used as a reference point for good practice.

The identical adoption of ISO/IEC standards is a worldwide norm. It promotes conformity with international benchmarks used by trading partners, and enables smaller countries to benefit from the work done by experts from many countries, rather than each country writing its own standards, promoting international consistency and certainty.

The drafts seek to create voluntary standards and specifications for organisations deploying AI, in the following four areas:

- **Transparency (SANS 12792 / ISO/IEC 12792:2025):** This sets out a common structure for the information that should be disclosed about an AI system, covering the system itself, the underlying model, the datasets used and the wider societal and environmental context. The aim is to help developers, deployers, auditors, authorities and end users understand how an AI system works, what it is meant to do and what its limits are.
- **Data quality (SANS 2620 Parts 1, 2, 3 and 5 / ISO/IEC 5259-1, -2, -3 and -5):** Data quality is critical to reliable AI, because AI systems learn from data sets. These parts set out key concepts and the data life cycle, measures for data quality characteristics such as accuracy, completeness and representativeness, requirements for managing data quality across the life cycle, and a governance framework for boards and management to direct and oversee data quality.
- **Human oversight (SATS 8200 / ISO/IEC TS 8200:2024):** This deals with the controllability of automated AI systems. It sets out a framework so that a human or other controller can monitor the state of an AI system and take over control when needed, with different levels of controllability and steps to test that these controls work.
- **Benefit and environmental impact (SATR 24030 / ISO/IEC TR 24030:2024 and SATR 20226 / ISO/IEC TR 20226:2025):**
 - The use case report collects 81 real-world AI use case summaries across sectors such as fintech, e-commerce, energy, agriculture, education, healthcare, insurance, manufacturing, media and entertainment, security and transport.
 - The environmental report gives an overview of the environmental footprint of AI systems across their life cycle and supply chain, including energy use, carbon, water and e-waste, and maps possible metrics and actions to reduce that impact.

Such standards are not legally binding (unless they have been made compulsory, for example by being referenced in law). Rather, they create voluntary standards which organisations can choose to adopt to improve quality, safety, transparency and the like, in accordance with the standards developed by internationally recognised experts.

How to comment

Anyone can comment on the draft standards by **10 November 2026**, by email to dsscomments@sabs.co.za.

Comments must be submitted using the SABS commenting template ([SABS_commenting_template.doc](#)), with reference to the [SABS User Guide](#).



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