

WIRING THE INDO-PACIFIC:

Western Australia's Green, Trusted Digital Infrastructure
for the AI Economy

July 2026



ABOUT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The global AI economy is creating a new infrastructure race. Digital infrastructure — data centres, subsea cables and sovereign compute — is becoming as critical to national security, sovereignty and economic competitiveness as energy grids, ports, water systems and telecommunications networks. Unlike those traditional predecessors, it moves and ages faster, carries explicit geopolitical weight, and demands a different balance of public and private investment. The question the roundtable addressed is therefore not whether this infrastructure will be built — that is settled — but where, on what terms, and who will shape it. Western Australia's natural advantages place it in a strong position to become a regional powerhouse in the AI infrastructure economy.

The roundtable produced a clear two-part argument. First, Western Australia occupies a genuinely unusual position in the Indo-Pacific: a rare convergence of renewable energy resources, available land, critical minerals, strategic connectivity, an industrial

and research base capable of generating substantial local demand, and political stability that serious capital increasingly treats not as background context but as a core component of the value proposition for secure compute and data centre services. No other location in the region combines all of these at scale. Second, the opportunity is only as good as the conditions on which it is realised. Green compute done well — with community buy-in, First Nations partnership, a sovereign supply chain and a skilled local workforce — creates a durable competitive position. Done carelessly, it creates the same ESG liabilities and social licence failures that have stalled large infrastructure projects elsewhere.

The report is organised around that two-part argument. Part I addresses why WA is the uniquely beneficial location for green AI infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific. Part II addresses how that potential can be realised responsibly and at scale.

PART I – WHY WESTERN AUSTRALIA

01

THE INFRASTRUCTURE RACE: WHY LOCATION DECISIONS ARE BEING MADE NOW

The roundtable opened from a premise that framed everything that followed: compute is no longer an isolated technology issue. It is critical economic infrastructure, and the scale of investment now required for the Indo-Pacific region to remain competitive is exponential, not the incremental growth of previous decades.

The defining characteristic of this moment is that investors are not asking whether to build. They are asking where. Capital is becoming more selective: location decisions are being shaped by energy availability, political stability, trusted governance, connectivity, water strategy and social licence — a more demanding checklist than the previous generation of data centre investment required. Southeast Asian markets are facing growing constraints on land, power and water that are limiting their capacity to absorb the scale of investment now in motion. That creates a genuine window for alternative locations to establish themselves. The window is not permanent, as several speakers observed.

“The question isn’t currently whether infrastructure is going to be built, but where, on what terms, and how fast. Capital is becoming more selective, and investors are looking for locations that offer certainty, resilience and trusted connectivity.”

— Roundtable Discussant

Context. Data centres already consume approximately 1.5 percent of global electricity. The IEA projects this will more than double to around 945 TWh by 2030. Capital expenditure on AI-related infrastructure in the United States has reached around two percent of GDP. ASEAN investment is lower in absolute terms but growing faster. Australia has already attracted announced data centre investment that could scale to more than A\$100 billion between 2023 and 2025, as per National AI Plan.

02

WA’S POSITION: A CONVERGENCE

The roundtable’s central argument about WA’s competitive position is that the state’s advantages are most powerful when understood as a system. Individual attributes — renewable energy, land,

connectivity — exist in various combinations elsewhere. What is harder to replicate is the combination.

Renewable energy resources in WA are not merely abundant; they are structurally well-suited to the demands of compute infrastructure. The Mid-West region in particular was described as one of the leading global renewable energy hotspots. Its wind and solar profiles are unusually complementary: strong solar generation through the day and consistent wind through the night, materially reducing the firming requirement relative to locations dependent on a single resource. Add gas reserves available for backup, battery storage capacity, and the grid investment already underway through the Clean Energy Link – North program, and the energy proposition becomes financially viable rather than merely promising.

Connectivity is equally structural. Perth’s direct subsea cable links to Singapore, Jakarta, the Middle East and Europe give WA genuine reach into the markets where digital demand is growing fastest. Subsea cable infrastructure is not easy to replicate quickly, and its presence makes WA a plausible Indo-Pacific gateway for digital trade, financial infrastructure and cybersecurity services — not only a location for compute workloads.

Stability and rule of law were raised repeatedly by several speakers as underrated parts of WA’s value proposition. In an environment of heightened geopolitical uncertainty, the predictability of the legal and regulatory environment — including protections for data privacy and ownership — is increasingly priced into infrastructure investment decisions. Southeast Asian markets tend to face challenges in this regard; WA does not.

Finally, WA has an **industrial and research base** that generates serious local demand. Mining automation, geoscience processing, energy system modelling, health and biomedical data, defence and space, university research, and the growing AI adoption across WA’s SME sector all represent real compute demand that can anchor the investment case. The roundtable heard a compelling argument about the scale of this: Australia’s business process outsourcing market is worth around A\$50 billion annually (IBISWorld), of which an estimated A\$10–20 billion flows offshore, principally to the Philippines and India. Agentic AI has the potential to repatriate significant portions of that spending into sovereign Australian compute, representing a substantial domestic demand anchor that operates independently of any regional export opportunity.

“WA is a unique market for investment in digital assets. Our geographic context, industrial and resource base, unique energy market, and strategic projects like the SKA Radio Telescope present a proposition for investors and operators that is genuinely hard to replicate.”

— Roundtable Discussant

Context. WA Government’s data centre prospectus positions the state as a southern hemisphere hub, highlighting transparency of regulatory frameworks and ESG credentials. Austrade identifies WA as an emerging APAC hub for green data centres on the basis of direct subsea connections, proximity to Asian markets, renewable energy and competitive power costs. Southeast Asia’s digital economy is forecast to reach US\$1 trillion by 2030, creating the regional demand base that WA’s connectivity position can serve.

03

WA ALREADY BUILDS THIS: INNOVATION AS PROOF OF CONCEPT

One of the roundtable's most significant contributions was concrete evidence that WA is not merely a location for hosting data centre infrastructure but a place where globally competitive compute technology is already being developed.

The discussion covered the development of immersion cooling technology for high-performance computing — a WA-built solution that places computing hardware in tanks of dielectric fluid, eliminating the need for refrigerants, reducing water consumption by twenty-five percent and cutting power costs by more than half compared with conventional air-cooled systems. The density achievable through this approach is striking: a single tank can house five petaflops of compute; a standard forty-foot shipping container fitted with immersion cooling systems holds forty petaflops. A fifty-megawatt facility using this technology can be built in approximately six months — without conventional construction. Land, a grid connection and a renewable energy source are the primary requirements.

The significance of this extends beyond the technology itself. It demonstrates that WA's case is not only about what the state can offer to external investors. It is also about what has already been built here, out of local industrial need, and what can now be exported. The technology was developed to solve a real problem for the oil and gas sector. It is now serving customers in astronomy, medical research, engineering and industrial applications, and is being deployed internationally. This is the pattern — local demand creating globally relevant capability — that the roundtable saw as a model for WA's broader digital infrastructure strategy.

"The reason we developed this was actually cost. It was a business decision. But it's also a green decision. And within six months, we could build a fifty-megawatt facility with shipping containers. You don't need concrete for a building. You just need land with renewable resources."

— Roundtable Discussant

04

WHERE THE INDUSTRY IS GOING: INSIGHTS FROM THE GLOBAL FRONTIER

The roundtable benefited from a direct read on the global technology trajectory, brought by a participant who had attended Nvidia's GTC conference in San Jose in the preceding days. The picture that emerged has direct implications for how WA should position itself.

Nvidia, currently the world's largest capitalised company at approximately US\$5 trillion, has US\$1 trillion in confirmed orders locked through 2027 (Nvidia GTC 2026). Jensen Huang's central message at GTC was the AI grid: a vision of decentralised computing built around containerised, edge-deployed assets — an architecture that closely mirrors approaches already being developed by WA-based companies.

This matters for WA's positioning in a specific way. There is a risk of assuming that early movers — facilities already under construction in the United States, the Middle East and Southeast Asia — have locked in permanent advantage. The roundtable challenged this directly. As compute hardware generations turn over quickly, and because the architectural direction is moving towards distributed rather than centralised infrastructure, late entrants to the hyperscale game are not necessarily at a structural disadvantage. The transition to agentic AI — systems that autonomously carry out tasks, use Small Language Models, access data and make decisions — adds another layer of distributed, low-latency compute demand that plays to WA's distributed model strengths.

"You're not coming late to this party. This party is just starting. You don't have to be worried about large hyperscale data centres that exist today, because they can be outmoded in a generation of chips."

— Roundtable Discussant

The roundtable also noted a near-term opportunity that does not require waiting for large-scale infrastructure. WA has approximately 6.6 gigawatts of installed generation capacity, with 2.5 gigawatts of that sitting on residential and commercial rooftops, flowing into the grid at the substation level. This is already creating congestion and curtailment. Containerised, energy-aware compute nodes — deployable in three to six months, designed to act as flexible demand response assets — represent an immediate opportunity to build compute capacity that absorbs this curtailed renewable energy and delivers grid benefits simultaneously. The first units of this kind are already on the ground in WA.

05

TRUST AS INFRASTRUCTURE: THE GEOPOLITICAL CASE FOR WA

A theme that emerged with increasing force across the session was that WA's stability and trustworthiness are not soft attributes but structural components of its investment proposition — as concrete, in the current environment, as megawatts and cable routes.

The geopolitical context is not abstract. Customers and investors are watching what happens when critical digital infrastructure is located in politically unstable environments. Some jurisdictions currently have no option but to host data within their borders — borders that are under active military threat. The demand for

geographic alternatives, for data sovereignty options that combine low latency, stable governance and physical security, is real and growing.

Australia, and WA in particular, offers something that most markets in the Indo-Pacific struggle with: the combination of proximity to Asia, trusted rule of law, alignment with regional security partnerships, and the political stability that makes long-horizon infrastructure investment viable. Green credentials matter in business, the roundtable observed, but so does the confidence that a facility built today will operate under predictable conditions in twenty years. WA can offer both.

“Australia and Western Australia are a trusted partner — stable, secure, with the capacity and talent to serve a role for our trading partners throughout the Indian Ocean Rim and Southeast Asia and well beyond. In the world we find ourselves in, trust is part of the infrastructure.”

— Roundtable Discussant

Context. Digital infrastructure is now geopolitical infrastructure. Subsea cables, cloud regions and AI compute capacity are part of how governments and companies think about national and regional resilience. WA's rule of law provides genuine protections for data privacy and ownership that are increasingly priced into location decisions by international investors and their legal advisers.

or exports all of its economic value without leaving a local supply chain. Any one of these failures creates a liability; several together can end a project.

The Australian Government's 2026 expectations for data centre investment reflect precisely this expanded definition. Projects are expected to prioritise national interest, support the energy transition, use water sustainably, invest in Australian skills and jobs, and strengthen local research and innovation capability. These are the criteria against which approvals, grid connections, land releases and co-investment decisions will be evaluated. WA has the opportunity to get ahead of this framework — treating it as a design standard rather than a compliance obligation.

“We should be judging green compute by its whole-system value — energy, water, workforce, supply chain, community, First Nations partnership. Projects that perform well across all of those will be easier to approve, easier to finance, and easier to sustain.”

— Roundtable Discussant

Context. The Australian Government's data centre guidance (2026) sets out five national interest criteria as conditions for project support. These align with what the roundtable identified as the defining features of responsible development: energy transition contribution, water sustainability, Australian jobs and skills, research and innovation, and community benefit.

PART II HOW TO DO IT RIGHT

06 REDEFINING GREEN COMPUTE: BEYOND THE ENERGY BILL

How to responsibly build a financially viable and ESG-aligned AI infrastructure in WA

A critical point of clarity that emerged early in the roundtable is that green compute is not synonymous with renewable electricity only. The definition has expanded, and investors, communities and governments have all moved on from the simpler framing.

A data centre can be powered entirely by renewable energy and still fail on ESG grounds if it consumes scarce water without accountability, increases energy costs for households or competing industries, creates grid congestion, fails to deliver real local employment, displaces other strategic land uses, excludes Traditional Owners and local communities from decision-making,

07 TWO DEVELOPMENT MODELS, WORKING TOGETHER

The roundtable surfaced a productive tension between two visions of what WA's compute infrastructure should look like — and arrived at the view that the tension itself is the answer.

The first vision is hyperscale: large precincts linked to dedicated renewable generation, transmission, water strategy, fibre and industrial land. These facilities serve the biggest workloads — AI training, sovereign compute, research supercomputing, defence-adjacent infrastructure. A gigawatt-scale facility of this kind represents approximately A\$50 billion in data centre investment, with another A\$10–12 billion for matching renewable generation and A\$5–8 billion for battery storage firming. These are large-scale projects that take around five years to develop fully. Super funds were identified as the most realistic source of domestic capital at this scale.

The second vision is distributed: modular, containerised compute nodes deployed at the distribution level of the energy grid — close to substations, renewable generation sites, and industrial users — designed to act as flexible demand response assets and absorb curtailed renewable energy. These can be deployed in three to six months, without conventional construction, wherever there is land and a grid connection. They bring compute to the edge, reduce

latency, build skills in regional locations, and reduce brain drain from country to city. They are also an exportable product: a capability built in WA's demanding remote-operations environment that can be replicated globally.

The roundtable was clear that choosing one model over the other would be a mistake. They serve different markets, operate on different timelines, and generate different kinds of local value. The immediate opportunity — absorbing the 2.5 gigawatts of curtailed rooftop solar already flowing into WA's distribution network — belongs to the distributed model. The longer-term Indo-Pacific positioning opportunity requires precincts. WA needs to develop both in parallel.

Context. The complement of hyperscale and distributed models also addresses the white elephant question raised during the discussion. Even if AI investment cycles shift or technology becomes more efficient at the edge, distributed infrastructure creates genuinely durable assets: mining customers in regional WA have persistent need for local process control and disaster recovery regardless of broader AI trajectories. The Square Kilometre Array alone will generate data volumes that represent a major compute challenge independent of the commercial AI cycle.

08 SOCIAL LICENCE: THE VARIABLE THAT WILL MAKE OR BREAK PROJECTS

The roundtable was consistent on one point that often gets treated as secondary: social licence is not a PR task. It is a design requirement. Projects that treat community concerns as problems to be managed after the design is fixed may encounter those concerns in the form of delays, cost overruns and reputational damage. Projects that build community benefit in from the beginning may find approval processes faster, financing easier and long-term operations more stable.

The concerns communities raise about data centre development are entirely predictable: Will this raise my power bill? Will it consume scarce water? Will it create real local jobs, or will those go elsewhere? Who owns the infrastructure and who benefits from the data it processes? Will renewable energy built to power it affect land, biodiversity or visual amenity? These are legitimate questions that deserve genuine answers, not communication responses.

The roundtable heard a specific and practical argument about timing. The right approach is to help communities develop their own asks before a major proponent arrives — so that when a project comes to town, the community has a position, a vision and a basis for negotiation. This is better for communities, who gain agency, and better for projects, which receive a clearer signal about what local expectations actually are. It is far more difficult to retrofit community benefit after a project has been designed.

"If you're not bringing the community along with you, you're going to have a bad time at some point along the line. It will take longer. It will cost more. It will leave a bad taste in people's mouths. And we need to recognise the positive externalities too — the high-paying jobs, the infrastructure, the businesses that follow the cable."

— Roundtable Discussant

The state government also has a role in shaping community expectations proactively. Community benefit guidelines are a starting point, but they do not substitute for genuine engagement. WA's communities have a relatively high tolerance for large-scale industry — a product of the resources sector and its history — but only where they can see direct benefit and where they have been engaged genuinely. The challenge with data centres is that the most visible benefits are indirect and take time to establish. Getting the communication right, from the beginning, is not optional.

09 FIRST NATIONS PARTNERSHIP: A GENUINE AND DISTINCTIVE OPPORTUNITY

The roundtable identified what may be WA's most distinctive single opportunity in green compute development: a potential First Nations partnership in the Mid-West, on Country, that brings together a convergence of assets rarely available in a single location.

A substantial land estate in the region is being returned to Traditional Owners and Native Title holders under an Indigenous Land Use Agreement — a legal recognition of rights and Country that have endured far longer than any infrastructure planning horizon. The result is a Traditional Owner group with substantial capital, landholdings well-suited to renewable energy development, a twenty-five gigalitre water allocation under a Strategic Aboriginal Water Reserve, and a clear, self-determined interest in economic development on the Country. The land's proximity to a planned transmission upgrade corridor for clean energy means the key inputs for serious data centre or related industry development are potentially co-located: land, power, water and connectivity — alongside the cultural, environmental and heritage responsibilities that must shape any future development on Country.

What development, if any, takes place on Country is for Traditional Owners to determine — according to their own priorities, governance structures and obligations to Country.

Done well, this approach is first and foremost about justice, self-determination and respect for First Nations' rights. It would also be a significant commercial differentiator for WA in the international market for ESG-conscious capital — evidencing that WA's approach to responsible development is genuine and structural rather than

rhetorical, which is precisely the kind of proof point that sophisticated investors increasingly require.

Context. The WA Government has published a Community Benefits Guideline for Large-scale Renewable Energy Projects, which explicitly requires collaboration with Traditional Owners and Native Title holders in Community Benefit Plans. Embedding equivalent expectations into data centre and AI infrastructure development from the outset — particularly around First Nations participation in ownership, governance and community benefit arrangements — would align state policy with the Australian Government's published Expectations of Data Centres and AI Infrastructure Developers, which set out national interest expectations including support for the energy transition, sustainable water use and investment in Australian skills and research.

10 WORKFORCE: READINESS BEFORE THE PROPONENT ARRIVES

The roundtable returned to workforce repeatedly and from multiple perspectives, all pointing to the same conclusion: human capital is a competitive differentiator in infrastructure site selection, not an implementation detail to be sorted after the decision is made.

The skills a serious data centre strategy requires span at least three layers. The first is power and construction: civil, electrical and mechanical expertise, cooling and power systems knowledge, and the operational know-how to run complex high-availability facilities. The second is the digital workforce: cloud engineering, cybersecurity, data science, network engineering and AI practice. The third is research and innovation: the people working on energy optimisation, quantum-safe security, HPC architecture and AI application development. All three layers are needed at scale, and all three take years to develop through university and vocational education pathways.

The lesson that most clearly shaped the roundtable's thinking came from a site selection decision process by a leading 'big tech' in the United States. The company was choosing a location for a major hyperscale facility from among several strong candidates. All had adequate land, power and climate advantages. What differentiated the winning location was workforce readiness: an advanced manufacturing heritage that produced technically capable workers, combined with Technical and Further Education (TAFE)-equivalent institutions that had pre-emptively developed free one-year retraining programs aligned to the facility's requirements. The workforce pipeline was in motion before the project was announced.

WA has the foundations: WA universities' programs in Electrical Engineering, Computing and Mathematical Sciences cover the core disciplines. The technical flexible programs at TAFE network have geographic reach. The resources sector has produced a generation of engineers experienced with complex, remote, high-availability

industrial operations. The gap is alignment — coordinating universities, TAFEs, industry and government around a shared pipeline before investors arrive, not after. The roundtable noted that this can be a challenging task: curriculum change in universities takes years, and the technology landscape is moving faster than standard academic cycles allow. The answer is accelerated industry-education partnerships and micro-credential-style programs.

"It's not just the blue skies and the renewable energy. It's about being ready. Everything lined up, including the workforce. That's what ultimately made the difference."

— Roundtable Discussant

Context. The roundtable noted a longer-horizon risk to WA's green positioning that deserves honest acknowledgement. In ten to fifteen years, nuclear energy may enter the global compute energy mix. If the market shifts significantly away from renewable energy as the primary source for data centres, WA's competitive advantage on energy credentials could be disrupted quickly. This does not undermine the near-term case, but it reinforces the importance of building WA's advantage across multiple dimensions — workforce, supply chain, connectivity, sovereignty — rather than relying on energy alone.

11 WHAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO DO

The roundtable arrived at a nuanced view of government's role that resists both extremes: government neither needs to build data centres nor should it stand passively aside. Its most important function is clarity — providing clear ESG-aligned frameworks and guidelines, avoiding coordination failures and removing barriers that can slow investment.

A revealing observation concerned how data centre proponents actually approach WA Government. They do not arrive at the start of their due diligence. They arrive after substantial independent research, already knowing WA's fundamentals, and looking for confirmation: ease of site access, social contract facilitation, energy and grid pathways, approvals timelines, what the state expects of them and how to navigate the entry process. Government's job at that moment is not to sell WA — the proponents have already made a provisional choice. It is to be a clear, coordinated interlocutor across energy, land, approvals, workforce and community.

This suggests a portfolio approach rather than project-by-project evaluation. A coordinated government response — an investor entry point, clear precincts with confirmed power, land, water and fibre pathways, a workforce compact with education providers, a community benefit and transparency framework, and a published green compute investment statement — would change WA's competitive position materially. The most important shift is from

passive to deliberate: shaping the terms on which investment arrives rather than responding to what proponents propose.

The roundtable also raised the sovereign data question as an underused lever. A clear government position on where Australian public data should be held, and what data sovereignty means in practice for sectors including defence, health and finance, could unlock a significant and stable increment of domestic demand. The analogy offered was COVID-era investment in domestic medical supply chains: government vision directed at the right moment produced sovereign capability within years. The same logic applies to compute.

“Government’s role is to be clear about what it needs to do and where it needs to get out of the way. Creating the enabling environment so that industry can innovate at the pace it needs to innovate — that is the core function.”

— Roundtable Discussant

12 COLLABORATION AND INVESTMENT CULTURE: THE HARDER ASKS

Two themes emerged in the roundtable’s closing exchanges that are harder to operationalise than policy settings but arguably as important.

The first is collaboration between WA-based technology companies and global hyperscalers. The roundtable heard a direct case for this: WA companies have years of experience building and deploying immersion-cooled HPC systems in demanding conditions, with Australian-educated engineers and locally developed technology. Global cloud providers have millions of potential customers and the commercial scale to deploy that capability at speed. The gap between them is not technical; it is structural and organisational. Building formal collaboration pathways — joint development, technology licensing, anchor customer relationships — would allow WA to capture value on both sides of the infrastructure equation: as a location and as a technology provider.

The second theme is investment culture. The roundtable was candid: Australia does not invest in early-stage technology at the rate of the US, UK, Europe or Asia. The risk appetite among domestic institutional investors for innovative ideas is lower, and the gap shows in how slowly WA-developed technologies scale relative to their potential. This is not primarily a government problem to solve — it is a market culture question. But it has real consequences for whether WA can build on the technology base it already has, or whether it will continue to develop innovations that scale somewhere else.

“Take a risk. Take a punt. Invest money in something that you believe in. We see it in America, in the UK, in Europe, in Asia. In Australia, I don’t see anything near those levels. Find things you love, and invest your money or your time in them.”

— Roundtable Discussant.

The roundtable also made a related point about the importance of foundations in workforce development. As AI changes what skills are valued and how quickly, the people best placed to adapt are those with a deep understanding of fundamentals — not just the surface outputs of current technology. Electrical engineering, network architecture, thermodynamics, data structures: these do not become obsolete when the application layer changes. WA’s education system should be producing people who understand how things work, not only what things currently do.

13 CONCLUSION: DESIGNING, NOT WAITING

The roundtable’s conclusion was unambiguous: WA has a genuine, time-limited and structurally grounded opportunity to become a trusted green compute and digital infrastructure hub for the Indo-Pacific. The window is real — the first containerised units are already on the ground in WA, the first proponent conversations are underway with government, and the investment capital looking for credible locations is tangible.

What WA has to offer is not simply a list of enabling conditions. It is a system: renewable energy of global quality at a highly competitive price, industrial demand capable of anchoring investment, connectivity infrastructure that reaches the world’s fastest-growing digital markets, technology capability already built here, and a governance environment that serious capital can trust over a twenty-year horizon. This combination is genuinely unusual in the Indo-Pacific. The argument for WA is not that it is adequate; it is that it is uniquely positioned.

But the opportunity is only as good as the choices made in realising it. Social licence earned from the beginning rather than managed after the fact. First Nations partnership designed in rather than consulted on at the end. Workforce pipelines built ahead of investor arrival. Collaboration between local innovators and global capital. Government clear about what it will enable and what it will expect. And an investment culture willing to back the capabilities WA has already developed.

“We have a global energy crisis. This is a serious problem but also an opportunity. The energy transition is forcing us to think differently. Government vision and investment directed now will produce the sovereign green capability we need in five years. Without it, we will keep importing what we could have built.”

— Roundtable Discussant.

The AI infrastructure race is already underway. The question is not whether WA will participate in it. The question is whether WA stakeholders will timely recognise the opportunity to lead the innovation and capture the value or compromise its sovereignty and economic development potential by making itself a passive and dependent adaptor of foreign solutions. This is a strategic planning and design question that needs to be answered now.

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